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Adventures in evangelism





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ADVENTURES IN EVANGELISM

EDMUND THICKSTUN



ADVENTURES IN EVANGELISM

BY

EDMUND THICKSTUN

SOMETIME MINISTER IN THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH;
NOW A MINISTER IN THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL
CHURCH, SOUTH

Introduced by the

REV. THEODORE S. HENDERSON, D.D.

ONE OF THE BISHOPS OF THE METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH



NEW YORK

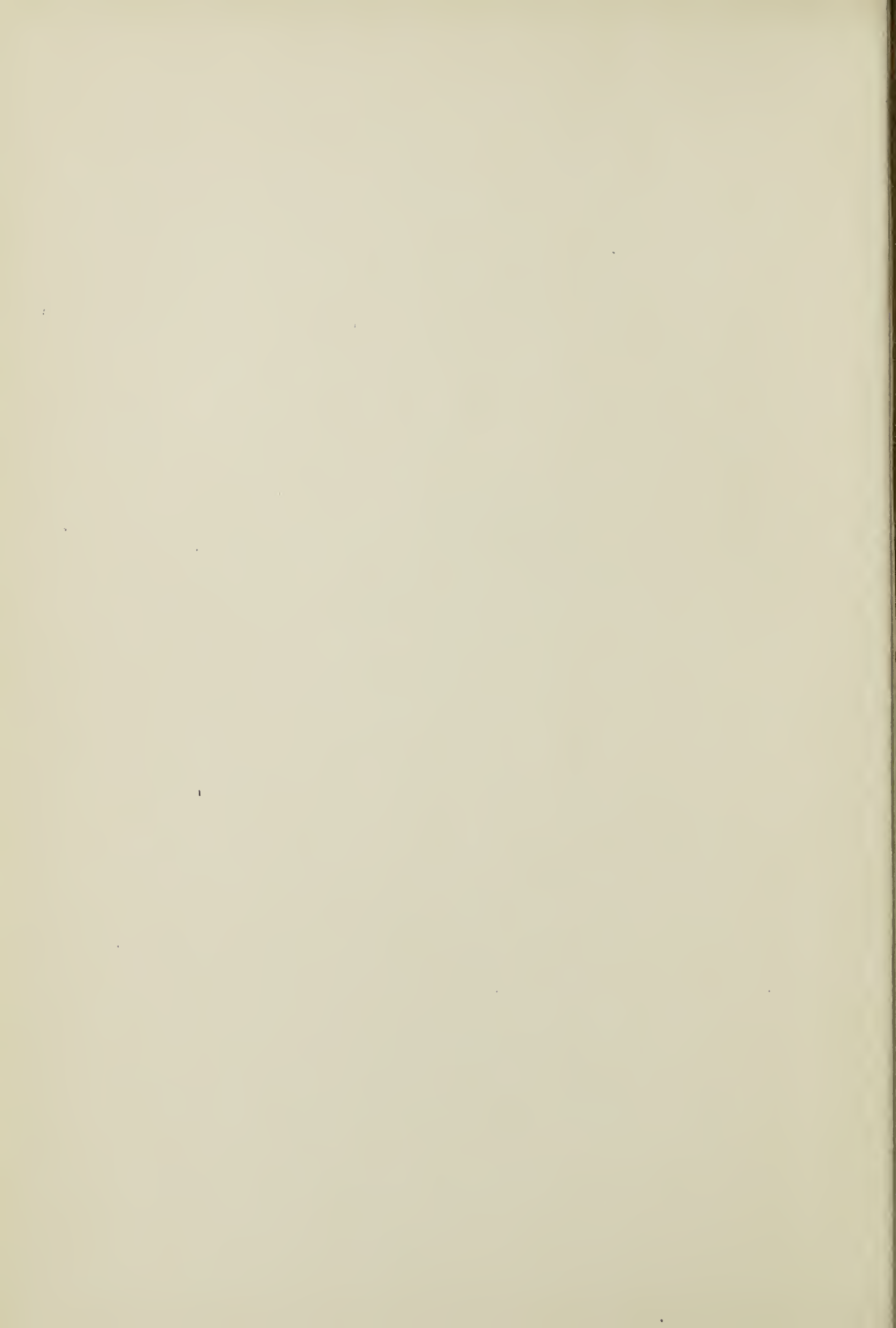
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ADVENTURES IN EVANGELISM. II

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TO
EVERYBODY
WHO IS TRYING TO SAVE
SOMEBODY



INTRODUCTION

No stories of work in the Christian Church are of more absorbing or abiding interest than those dealing with the turning of men and women to God. We enjoy reading of the progress of great religious movements, of organizations, of buildings, of community projects, but the records which find the readiest response in the hearts of us all are those which deal with the conversion of souls. It may truly be said that evangelism is not the whole of the work of the Church or of the minister, but it has such fundamental relation to all things else that, when it is lacking, the harmony of the whole is broken and incomplete.

To tell such stories is not merely art. No artist could picture such scenes unless his own soul were in sympathy with the subject so as to enable him to understand just what were the processes by which the soul arrived at its place of transformation. The skillful pen may be needful; the understanding spirit is indispensable. That the writer of "Adventures in Evangelism" has this spirit is evidenced not only by the sympathetic treatment of the stories which

his pen relates, but by the work of his ministry during many years. He has been constantly making "adventures in evangelism," and he knows whereof he speaks because his own ministry has been blessed of God in the conversion of souls.

It is of personal interest to say that my acquaintance with Brother Thickstun came about through his reading a reprint of an article of mine in a Nashville newspaper. From the reading of those words of mine, copied from another publication, there was started a train of thought which led to the revival in his breast of the deferred desire to give to the world the stories which now find place in this volume. God's providence works in mysterious ways to fulfill his purposes. Since then it has been my pleasure to know Brother Thickstun by correspondence and to appreciate his endeavor to serve the Church and the world through his book. May God bless it as it goes on its mission to revive the interest of pastors and laymen alike in the supreme work of winning men and women to their Saviour.

THEODORE S. HENDERSON.

Detroit, Michigan.

PREFACE

You may depend upon the essential truth of all herein narrated. The non-essentials of dates and proper names are generally fictitious. Characters, settings and events are sometimes composite, but the parts from which they are compounded are true. One character in the book has the career he wished for, rather than the one which he achieved. No effort has been made to remember dialogue as it was originally spoken. It was easier to make the book that way than to run about the country asking permission of people to print their stories. I can say with Eggleston that the strangest things in it are the truest. If your pastor has had twenty years' experience, he will probably tell you that he can relate incidents as extraordinary as any here set down.

EDMUND THICKSTUN.

Danville, Alabama.



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I: THE BIGGEST GAME

Would that the spirit of our Methodist Fathers might come upon us, sending us out in downright earnestness to hunt down the last man within reach, that we might lead him to the life of Christ.

BISHOP ANDERSON.

ADVENTURES IN EVANGELISM

I

The Biggest Game

“. . . And the bear got a slash at my left cheek, which accounts for my wearing whiskers in this smooth-shaven age.” The State Senator parted the beard on his face and showed an ugly scratch beneath. “But I got him with my gun held at arm’s length, and with my thumb on the trigger, as I drew it around to stick the muzzle in his mouth.”

“Bravo, Coleman. That was a red-blooded man’s adventure. None of us have any such experiences to relate.” Travis, the lawyer, said this, with a long stare of admiration at his friend, Senator Coleman, real estate man, Wyoming booster, and in his vacations, big game hunter. Howbeit, he was a steward and trustee in his church, and a man of deep spirituality.

“Well, now, as to that,” drawled the Senator, “I should not be surprised if every one of you

fellows can tell something thrilling right out of your professional experiences." Travis's eyes narrowed in reflection for a moment, and then he remarked musingly:

"Why, of course there are thrilling moments in a lawyer's life. I remember that once I undertook the defense of a poor boy accused of crime on circumstantial evidence. From the testimony of blind, insensate *things*, merely, it seemed that he would be condemned. I shall always thank God that I believed him to be innocent. I worked night and day on the case with the bitter thought, 'What if I shall fail, and the poor fellow should hang for a thing he never did?'

"I became so obsessed with the case that I was scarcely myself for a few days, during the trial in the Circuit Court. The evidence was dead against me. When I arose to plead, my mind became strangely alert. All of the cases in legal history where men were illegally punished came to me with great distinctness. I cited them rapidly without my notes. I told the jury of case after case where other jurors before them had rendered verdicts of not guilty and had been rewarded afterwards by the confession of the real criminal. Then, in my conclusion, I saw red. I lost myself in my bitter invective against unseeing circumstance. But all of the time it

seemed to me that I was saying nothing. I closed in a welter of physical perspiration and an agony of spiritual sweat. I could have sweat blood, it seemed to me, if that would have convinced.

“When I sat down, the prosecutor leaned over to me and whispered:

“ ‘Travis, that speech deserves to win, but my facts are too stubborn. Your man will hang.’ I replied miserably:

“ ‘I know it.’ And that was all I could think as the judge rendered his charge. He went out of his way, I think, to caution the jury against being carried away by the frenzied eloquence of counsel.

“Well, what do you think? That jury, in fifteen minutes, brought in a verdict of ‘not guilty’. The prisoner and I sat staring at each other like two idiots for a moment. Then he arose and took me in his arms like a baby and sobbed:

“ ‘Mr. Travis, you done it; you done it. The evidence were all agin me, but you jest wouldn’t have it thet way. So the jury couldn’t see it any different from what you seen it.’ ”

Every eye was glistening with a tear drop trembling on its brink. Travis continued:

“Two years later the actual murderer confessed on his death bed that he was guilty of the

crime for which my client had been tried and acquitted.”

Coleman now turned to Dr. Connyngton:

“Doc, old man, can’t you beat that as badly as it beat my bear story?” The physician replied:

“I get four-fifths of my satisfaction in saving life against seemingly insuperable obstacles. It’s a great sensation to sit down by a moribund patient, and say to Old Man Death:

“‘Now, really, you know, you just can’t have this man—not this time.’

“I remember a lady who was in the last stages of puerperal fever. I felt that if her own family could be her nurses, she need not die. I told this to the husband, two sons and one daughter. One of the boys was nineteen, the other was seventeen, the daughter was fifteen. Both of the boys worked in the railroad shops, the girl kept the house, and the father was unemployed. My dread was the change of nurses in the ordinary run of neighborhood ministrations around a sick bed.

“It was arranged that the daughter should keep the house and manage the younger children; the younger of the breadwinners should nurse the mother from six in the evening until nine o’clock; the older son would then go on duty until midnight; the father then took up the

task, staying with the patient the remaining eighteen hours of the twenty-four. By this system, I secured an unfailing, uniform treatment of the case, with the minimum of irritation for the patient. The nurses kept an accurate and minute record of the case, and from this I often saw how to change the treatment.

“Well, we saved her. I tried to credit the splendid nursing for the successful issue, but those folks insisted that it was all due to me. The fee, which was sharply scaled, was the lesser satisfaction that I derived from the case. Those splendid boys and that worn old father caressed me with every glance of the eye and pose of the body. She who had wandered for weeks on the verge of the death-stream was most beautiful in her gratitude that I had kept her until she could ‘see her baby waiting on himself.’”

After the others had choked down their feelings, Coleman turned to Green, the minister, and said:

“Elijah, we all understand your case, to some extent. We know that you are in the ministry merely because you like it. Everybody believes that you would have succeeded admirably in business. I have a theory that you are a dead game sport, but that you would prefer hunting men to hunting bears. Come, old sport, tear off a leaf from your experience.”

The four of them were on their way to Conference. They had boarded the train at Barrington, near the end of the line, and were shackling along over a frontier roadbed that excruciated them to the breaking point. But they liked each other and did their best to offset the tortures of travel by the pleasures of good fellowship. It was twenty miles to the next station, where more passengers would get aboard, so Green had something over an hour to talk before they would be distracted by other events than the bouncing of the coach. [The minister began:

“I never looked at my profession from the standpoint of sport before, but with me it is much as the Senator says.”

“I wonder if more preachers had the hunting instinct, whether there would not be more hunting than sermon-making,” said Coleman. “I have often thought that the greatest scandal Christianity has to carry is the indifference to the identical job which, it seems to me, we are expected to work at. Some one said that the best evidence of our faith is to proceed upon it.” Elijah added:

“It seems to me that it is nearly impossible to preach without at least a general evangelistic aim. I can't say that I always have a specific aim, but it has happened frequently that, when

I was merely following the routine, I have seen evangelistic fruit.”

“Well, get on 'Lije, and give us one of your man hunts,” exclaimed Coleman.

“What I shall tell you occurred when I was on my first work in western Iowa. My circuit was absolutely new ground. The only preaching places were in schoolhouses, but they were well built and well heated. My very first protracted meeting was at a schoolhouse on Chicken Creek. The oldest inhabitant had been there but three years. The tough element was in control, but I heard from Ben Draper, an old British Wesleyan, and my sole dependence for prayer, that a man by the name of Peter Cook had been a class leader in York State. His house seemed to be headquarters for all the harum-scarum doings in the country. So I decided before I opened the meeting that my strategy consisted in capturing Cook for God.

“On the first night of the meeting, I went home with him. He was very nice and fished out a beautiful family Bible from the bottom of a trunk. I began to admire the luxurious binding and numerous illustrations. I remarked:

“‘You have just bought this Book, Brother Cook.’

“‘No, I bought that in York State more'n three year ago.’

“ ‘Indeed! Then you have taken extremely good care of it.’

“ ‘Now Parson, you know this here country as well as anybody. An’ you know Bibles out on the table ain’t among our good qualities.’

“ ‘So you just bought this Book to be a doing—or maybe you got it at a bargain.’

“ ‘Oh, I bought it sentimental, all right, expectin’ to keep up Bible readin’ an’ family prayer, jest as my father done in York State, but—well you know how it goes in this country; most of us left our religion on the east bank of the Mississippi, the day we crossed the river.’ The children had come behind me and were looking at the pictures. Charles spoke up:

“ ‘Dad, leave the Book out, f’m now on. It has a sight o’ purty picters in it.’ William joined in:

“ ‘Yes, Dad, leave it out. I didn’t know it was in the house.’

“ ‘It seems like a shame to leave sich a expensive thing around, jest fer childern to play with,’ said the father. I replied:

“ ‘There isn’t any law against your reading the Bible in your family, is there? If it were right out here on the table, you would be reminded oftener of your duty.’ Cook twisted uneasily in his seat, and countered:

“ ‘Well, anyhow, we can have readin’ an’

prayer to-night, Parson. I guess the Book better stay out on the table. Be careful with it, children.'

" 'All right, Dad. We'll take the best kind o' care o' it.'

"In my prayer, I told the Lord how much I needed Peter Cook in my work there at Chicken Creek, and I was so refreshed by the prayer that I felt as though it would be a walkover to get the old wheel horse of York State into the harness. But Pete was offish next morning. When I pressed the matter on him a little, he evaded:

" 'Well, you see, Parson, I think you are too young to organize this kind of thing. I think I'll wait till the Conference sees fit to send a man with some experience to this here work.'

" 'Yes, Brother Cook, but an older man with plenty of experience would require higher pay than I need. I think it is important to jump in and get the thing in good running order this year, and maybe that will encourage the Conference to send you a better man than I am. But suppose they send you another low-grade man—or send me back. Don't you see that I can do a great deal better work with your help, than without it?'

"The man fell silent. I felt that it was the part of wisdom not to continue the subject in the

presence of others. When we went to saddle my horse, I brought up the matter once more. He interrupted me:

“ ‘Now here, Parson, I jest ain’t a goin’ to make the break in this meetin’. I’ve been too much of a sinner to jump right in fust thing an’ try to lead these here folks into the fold. Of course, I see the need of it, but I’m so plaguy easy to criticize. I weren’t fair on you in the house, jest now. It don’t make no difference how young you are. Fur as that goes, my Charley or Billy can git up a revival here, if the Lord sees fit to use ’em. Fact is, the little shavers had me nigh a shoutin’ last night, when they axed me to leave the Bible out on the table. But I hev led this here Valley dancin’, playin’ cards, drinkin’, cussin’, and I jest nachelly got too much respect fer the feelin’s of the people to start up the religious game.’

“Well, I could see nothing else to do, but to go quietly ahead on my visiting round. Cook came to the meeting every night, but sat in one of the farther corners. As I shook hands with him at the close of every service, I always told him that I was praying for him, but he never, by word or motion, told me to go on praying.

“Of course, you can fancy that I began to near the end of my resources. I had not been converted a year, and, although I had been reared

a Christian, I had been astray for several years previous to my reclamation. I had no books except the Bible, the Discipline, and the Hymn Book along with me. My Bible had a very useful index in it, with which I could make sermons of a sort. Poor old Ben Draper got into a very agony for the salvation of the people. He took to going very early to the schoolhouse, and after making the fire, he knelt in prayer near the teacher's desk, and remained on his knees until my arrival. This was the only thing that kept the youngsters from tearing down the house.

“A dance or two had been announced, but, although no one had yet professed religion, the dances failed to draw the crowd. After nearly two weeks, the only encouraging thing I could note, in taking stock of my progress, was the continued heavy attendance, much of it from ten miles away. The moon was going to full that night, and the snow, eighteen inches deep, was alluring for the sleighs. I was expecting a very large crowd, but on that morning I had no idea whatever of what I would say to the people that night. I did not know that, spiritually speaking, an earthquake was rumbling beneath me. I felt sorely in need of human help and sympathy. So I made for Peter Cook's house. He was digging a well. I rode to the mouth of the well, and said:

“ ‘Brother Cook, I have come to you for advice and help. I am just about at the end of my row.’

“ ‘Run out o’ sermon timber, eh? Go put your horse up, an’ come here, an I’ll give you a text, an’ a idee of how to preach it.’

“I was shortly standing on the brink of the well and looking down at him. He was six feet below the surface, and had reached ‘hard-pan,’ a tough stratum which seemed to extend pretty well over the country. He could get only a very little of it on the point of his pick at each blow. He went right on digging, while he talked.

“ ‘This here text is in ’Zekiel, thirty-third chapter and ’leventh verse. I heerd a old minister preach it when I was a boy, an’ it is jest four words: “Why will ye die?” That old preacher took one word at a time. But he took the last word fust. He read “die” to mean hell, “Ye” means everybody. “Will” throws responsibility on men. “Why” means “What’s the reason?” ’ ’ ’ ”

I thanked him for the text and outline, and told him that I would use it. Then I said:

“ ‘Brother Cook, it’s simply awful that you don’t come out fully on the Lord’s side and help me in this work. How much you have helped me here, in just a moment’s time!’ He was silent for a long while, and I could think of nothing further to say, so I was silent also. Then he

lifted his pick, pulled a small piece of clay from it, and said:

“ ‘Looks like I’ll never git through this hard-pan. I been a peckin’ away at it all mornin’, an’ nothin’ done yet.’

“ ‘Looks like I’ll never get through the tough hard-pan around your heart. I’ve been pecking away at it for nearly two weeks, and nothing done yet.’

“ ‘Then he looked up at me. His eyes were red with weeping, and his cheeks were tear-sodden. His voice was husky as he said:

“ ‘ ‘Lijey, you pecked through to my heart more’n a week ago.’

“ ‘The next second I was down in the well, and we had clinched. I was praising God, and he was crying and laughing both at once. When the frenzy of our feelings had passed, I said:

“ ‘Now, Pete, you must help me out to-night. I just won’t be put off any longer.’

“ ‘All right, ’Lije. You can ask anything you want of me. Now go to your room and study that sermon.’

“ ‘That sermon nearly preached itself. At the close, I said:

“ ‘Now I’ve been asking you to this altar every night. No one has ever come. There is scarcely a person in this house, who has arrived at the years of accountability, who does not know that

to continue as he is going will bring him to death eternal. Turn ye; turn ye; for why will ye die? The people arose and began to sing:

“ ‘Sinners, turn, why will ye die?’

“Just then Pete Cook started down the aisle from the northeast corner. And he came preaching. He was torrential in his words:

“ ‘Come on, neighbors, come on. I’ve led you toward the devil as long as I intend to. Come on, and let’s get back to God. Right here at this mourner’s bench, down in the dust, is where we belong. Some of us are mighty bad—I’m the cussedest one of all. Lots of us are old church members, but we must start down here at this altar.’ Just then, he reached the altar and fell on his knees. He started praying for salvation. Down on one side of him fell his wife, and on the other Jim Grimm, his nearest neighbor, and, down to that moment, his bitter enemy. And they all started praying at once.

“The crowd surged forward, and instantly the space around the speaker’s desk was crowded with kneeling penitents. In just a moment, Mrs. Cook and Mrs. Grimm arose, almost together, and embraced each other in an ecstasy of feeling. The last time before that in which their bodies had touched each other was more than a year before, when each had tried to scalp the other.

A little while afterwards Grimm arose, happy as an angel. He grabbed me, and came near ending the meeting right there, by nearly squeezing the life out of me. He then rushed to Cook, and falling again by his side, began praying for his erstwhile enemy with such extraordinary fervor that Cook was shortly up and shouting.

“Then it was truly good to see those four people go to work with the other penitents. And until ten o’clock, it was one jubilee after another over some one who had struggled through to happiness.”

Elijah had finished. Coleman spoke first:

“’Lije, I’d rather be able to tell that story than all the bear yarns I know. I wonder why we don’t have such times nowadays?”

“What do you mean, Senator?”

“I mean what I say. At our meetings in Barrington we live in mortal dread that some one will do something elemental. We have a quiet, genteel solo or some other innocuous music; a well-prepared sermon, strong enough, generally, but delivered with extreme propriety; decision cards are passed in a hushed stillness; minister prays an able but soothing prayer—nobody harmed or helped much by it; more nice music; doxology; benediction; good-night; come again. Meantime, here is this nicotine-soaked, boot-legging, shimmy-dancing, divorce-hunting, bood-

ling, grafting, gambling, bedeviled, hell-bent old world running like a scared dog toward damnation. In the old days, the preacher and the people got a double-gear, back-action, automatic hustle on themselves, and something had to tear loose."

"Of course, Senator, just now you have not in mind the Salvation Army, the slum missions, the remote country points. You can see as primitive revival methods in such places as I witnessed in my meeting on Chicken Creek. Go to some of them, and you will see all of the old-time phenomena of the revival. You will remember that I was out to Buskirk's Schoolhouse for a week last winter. Well, we had an old-fashioned revival there."

"Why don't you get up one in town?"

"Because the town doesn't take its religion that way."

"So there are differences in religion?"

"No. But there are differences in the spiritual manifestations of religion as various as the temperaments of the professors."

"It is a matter of temperament, then?"

"More so than you would think. If I had any literary facility, I would make a book about that very phase of the subject. I could put at least a score of outstanding examples in it of different ways in which the Spirit acts in regeneration."

II: BROTHER GREEN

One of the primary mistakes of men in their relation to religion is to think of it as a creed, whereas religion is primarily an experience. Religion is, first of all, the delivering power of God in the soul. The deepest need, therefore, is to go directly to God Himself, for light and life, instead of to the theologian. A knowledge of God, thus obtained, will clarify the intellect at the same time that it cleanses the heart.

BISHOP AINSWORTH.

II

Brother Green

Elijah Green had some literary facility, though he disclaimed it in conversation with his friends that day on the train. When the frenzy has been upon him, he has frequently sat down and written a piece which he felt should be in print. Some of these have come to my notice, and will be found in this book. Out of my long and intimate acquaintance with him, I have written several others, and am giving them to the world in this volume. I am anxious that my *beau ideal* of a country pastor shall have a wider constituency than the mere pastorates he served.

'Lije, as he was affectionately called, loves the country church. I have heard him say that he was never pastor in a town with a population of five hundred. I have heard people ask him why he did not try for the large and influential churches of the Conferences which have employed him. He would answer:

"I take what the Bishop gives me, and then I can hold him responsible for my failure. If I should ask him for a certain charge, and if I should then fall down in my ministry on that

work, I should be terribly chagrined. Besides, I would feel nervous on entering a work which I had solicited, directly or indirectly. But I find myself calmly facing each new responsibility with the feeling that if I fail, I can lay it to the lack of acumen in the Bishop. He ought to have known better than to have sent me to a place where I would fail."

Brother Green was reared in a Christian home, but he grew indifferent to religion in the Army, where he spent an enlistment. After a short time in civil life, he became tremendously interested in the temperance question, from the purely humanitarian standpoint. He did not profess religion himself, but he felt that, of all people, professors should fight the liquor business. Forty or more years ago, many so-called religious people distilled and sold liquor. In fact, there were many moderate drinkers in the Church. This drove Green well-nigh frantic. He felt deeply on subjects that interested him, and this indifference set him to thinking. Then he wondered how an all-wise, all-powerful and *good* God could allow man's inhumanity to man. It was only a step to atheism—the child of the manse had come to believe that there is no God.

Now this man's difficulties were all spiritual. He knew little and cared less about physical science. So it was an awful calamity for him to

lose faith in God. He was not a vulgar sinner. He had a thoroughbred contempt for the ordinary peccadilloes of life. So he did not drift into the sensuous and sordid things from which so many people have to be saved. But all the same, he reached the point where he lost sympathy with mankind. Without having read Darwin, he had crudely formulated the maxim that the weakest ought to go down in the struggle of life. To himself, he debated the existence of rectitude, honor, beauty, love.

In this wretched state, Green quit censuring men for doing things which he did not like. The sinner was just an animal—many of them mere swine. What right had he to drive a four-legged hog out of the mire—the hog enjoyed it. Why should he deprive a two-legged hog of the same privilege, when he enjoyed it so? You see, there was no ultimate authority in his scheme of things. Without authority, how could he proceed? He was too modest himself to arrogate authority, and resented it in any one else, because he felt that no other man had any more authority than he had.

Green often thanked God that he was not in this state very long. He says that he would never have been able to make anything out of the universe if he had remained an atheist. Curiously enough, light first came to him from the

human viewpoint. One day, as he was working in a potato patch, he soliloquized thus:

“These clods contain the elements that compose the potato. Certain chemicals are taken by the potatoes from the clods for building up the human frame, when taken into the human system. The physical system is all that I apprehend. So it must be that what we call honor, integrity, love, come from the potato, which comes largely from the clods.”

He did not know, then, how near he was to the truth as it is related in Genesis: “God made man out of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” He was groping along without God, and the entire thought of the clods and potatoes only nauseated him. Much as he hated the doctrine, to him, at that time, the universe was merely physical. He heartily disdained the physical. He was genuinely psychical. So he exclaimed:

“Out on such a doctrine! I’d rather believe that there is a God. The fact is, that I *want* to believe that there is a God. So far as I know, there is only one objection to the doctrine, and that is the fact of all this wrong in the world. I see that the wrong is nearly entirely due to man—Ah! I wonder if there is a thought there?”

The universe, outside of man, seems all right. Let me see how God will fit in right here. If God is, he made man with all that that implies. And—O Stupidity, thy other name is Elijah Green. Why, God made man and gave man a will of his own. The key to the moral universe is man's free will. Why didn't I see it before?"

With the postulate "God is" to work from, Brother Green had a mighty rebound of faith in humanity. He had been like a tethered horse, trampling around and around, and eating up all within his prescribed limits. But the lariat broke, and let him out onto the boundless prairie. He wandered from one delicious morsel to another. It was all so easy to understand now. Why, if God is, everything worth while is. Oh, the physical universe was suddenly shot through with spirituality. He first recognized the power, but shortly he noted the love in it all. And in a little while, he could see where the integrity, honor, chastity, beauty came in.

But Elijah Green was not yet a Christian—far from it. His grudge against the liquor-loving part of the church would not down. But a curious phenomenon soon presented itself. While some in the church were pro-liquor, nearly all of those ranged against the business belonged to the church. And Elijah got mighty cold comfort

from the reflection that not many of his non-professing friends were temperance men. Among the most earnest workers for the temperance cause was a minister with whom he became intimate. This Thomas Freeman became deeply concerned about Elijah. Once they were on the same program at a temperance meeting. 'Lije was radical in his speech, but he did not use the Bible in what he had to say. Freeman noticed this, and, suspecting that 'Lije was a skeptic, invited him to his house and drew him into a discussion of religion. The younger man expressed himself freely on Biblical topics for a while, and was surprised that he was never checked and rebuked by the minister. Freeman's attitude was tolerant, because he thought to himself that if Green was an honest skeptic, he must be convinced by argument that he was in the wrong and not merely be silenced by a rebuke. Finally Green said:

“Mr. Freeman, I would rather not talk religion with you. I have a great respect for you, and I am afraid of hurting your feelings. If you will excuse me, I shall allow you to do all of the talking on religion and the Bible hereafter.”

“It is fine of you, my boy, to wish to avoid hurting me, but you will never get anywhere by merely listening to me. Let us talk this thing through, at the risk of hurting each other's feelings a little. I'll promise not to get miffed at

anything you say, and you are to keep sweet and keep smiling at all that I say."

"Agreed!" laughed 'Lije, holding out his hand. "Only I warn you that I have always cultivated a thick skin, and it takes an awful hard jab to get through it. If your skin is at all thin, I am much the better equipped for the tussle."

They spent the evening in discussion, and when 'Lije arose to go, the minister said:

"If you will promise to come to my church next Sunday, I shall prepare a sermon on Christian Evidences. Maybe I shall say something that will help you."

"Good! I'll be there."

The minister helped Green in that sermon. As he passed down the aisle, Green was standing at the end of his pew. Freeman shook hands, and asked:

"Well, Brother Green, did that help you?"

"Yes, sir; it helped me some. But I have many objections which you have not touched upon. I shall write them out and bring them down to your house next Tuesday evening."

"All right," returned the minister. "Maybe I can answer all of them; though I have no strong hope of doing so. It is so easy to ask questions. Now let me see; I take it that you are after the truth?"

"Yes, indeed; that is what I want."

“Incidentally, you would like to be satisfied in your mind that the Bible is by authority of God.”

“I would rather know that than anything else.” All this time their hands were clasped. They were the same height and were looking square across at each other. The kindly brown eyes of the elder man transfixed the younger. He spoke deliberately:

“My dear sir, what’s the matter with asking God himself if the Bible is His Word?” Green gave an uneasy laugh and replied:

“Whose god shall I go to, Mr. Freeman? I don’t believe in your God, and my god doesn’t listen to prayer.”

“You honestly ask my God to show you the light on this subject. I feel sure that He will answer you so that there will be no further doubt in your mind.”

“Well, I’ll study on it,” replied Green, with another uneasy laugh—and then forgot it.

“At that time, Green was employed in the woods, chopping fuel, and hauling it to town, a mile away. He employed his leisure until Tuesday noon preparing his list of questions. One of them was, “Who was Cain’s wife?” Another read: “Wasn’t David a malodorous chap to be ‘a man after God’s own heart’?” Green was a

pretty good sort of fellow, but he could not avoid a malicious tingle of satisfaction at the way he was going to "wind the preacher up."

About two o'clock on Tuesday afternoon, he was busy chopping and studying on his wonderful list of questions. His feelings toward the minister were kindly but patronizing:

"Poor fellow; I wonder what he will say to all that? It seems a shame to drive such a nice man into such a hole. Maybe it will teach him not to be so cock-sure of a thing."

As he chopped on, the young man remembered the elder man's impressive words to ask *his* God about the matter. Again 'Lije smiled at the idea of his praying to any god. Then, without intending it, he was saying:

"Well, if the Bible is worth any trouble at all, why shouldn't I honestly test his plan? I can't afford to let a chance go by which might really satisfy me. It would be a low-down, dirty trick to play on such a man, worrying him with a legal cap sheet of queries, when I have not done the little bit of a thing he asked me to do. No harm can come of it, so here goes!"

He had promised the minister that he would "study over it", but this was all the study he gave it. Instantly he knelt near a big oak tree and prayed as follows:

“O God of Thomas Freeman, if the book called the Bible is thy Word, give me to know that fact here in thy own way.”

A great awe fell upon the kneeling man. He felt that something tremendous was about to transpire. There were no adventitious human agencies near to assist in what was going to happen. He was twenty-five years old—abundantly mature to know what he was about. The day, March 29, 1874, in that northern latitude, was chill with a recent snow. No birds were astir. The winds were quiet. For one, two, three seconds, the man waited for the coming of God. Then suddenly HE WAS THERE. A compelling, enveloping, soul-filling, all-pervading Presence was manifesting itself above, beneath, all around, and within that kneeling form. Elijah Green often said afterwards that his own existence is less real to him than the existence of the God of the Bible. And he is one who, when he is convinced of a thing, is convinced all over. The immensity of his discovery called pause upon his thoughts. As noted before, the psychical in the universe demanded Elijah Green's respect, and commanded his attention. What he had just learned was of more importance, he said, than all mechanics. Nothing in biology, or astronomy, or chemistry could be so fascinating to him as the further study of this subject, which had just

opened to him so miraculously. But almost immediately occurred to him this thought:

“The Bible is God’s Word, but it condemns my life. I must square myself with the Bible, or go down into hell.”

It seems strange that a minister’s son, reared by a godly mother, an attendant at Sunday school for many years, should not have proceeded at once to the conversion of his soul. But he who, a moment before, had spoken to himself of the assurance of the minister, now felt the utmost diffidence about the ground he was treading. He suddenly became frenzied about his soul’s salvation. Everything spiritual grew dark and forbidding. All nature reflected the gloom. But he waited until he would again be with his friend Freeman. The afternoon seemed interminable. He ate but little supper and, making hasty preparations, started for Rev. Thomas Freeman’s house, with the list of questions safe in the stand table drawer in his room.

Once out in the open, he hurried into the town. His eagerness increased with each step. When he reached the residential street on which the minister lived, and there were few persons out of doors, he ran for the last block and rang the bell violently. Freeman himself came to the door. He had just finished his supper, and had come to the parlor.

“Why, good evening, 'Lije. You startled me. Come in.”

Seated in the parlor, the young man became silent. The minister watched him narrowly for a moment; half guessed what was the matter. Then very pleasantly:

“Well, 'Lije, did you make out that list of questions?”

“Don't say questions to me, Mr. Freeman. I am a poor, miserable sinner. I want salvation. May we go where we shall not be disturbed?”

“Yes, come right into the library.” Everything was solid ground for the minister now. He understood the case and could act with as much precision as a physician can, when he is sure that a patient has the measles. When they were seated in the library, he began:

“ ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ ‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.’ ”

Never had Scripture so spoken to the heart of Elijah Green as it did at that time. He broke down and cried like a baby. Freeman continued to quote appropriate Scripture for a while, when Green suddenly interrupted:

“Oh, let us pray.” They knelt, and Elijah immediately began to pray. But instead of getting relief, his condition seemed to grow worse—intolerable. His jaws seemed locked; the words would not come fast enough; he seemed to be sinking. He lost the power of utterance. Then the minister took up the prayer. His voice grew less and less distinct to Green. He was in an agony of bodily, mental, spiritual cramp. He thought that he was dying, when he heard the minister say:

“Lord, let in the light now.”

“Do, Lord,” almost shouted the suppliant; and He did. The horrible cramp that instant loosened on his muscles; his mind was clear and active; his spirit was at peace; he grew calm and remained kneeling, listening with great contentment to the remainder of the prayer. It seemed incongruous for the minister to continue to ask for his salvation. Then the prayer ended and they resumed their seats. For a moment, Freeman did not happen to look toward Green, but sat there, talking about the power of prayer. Then his glance happened to light on the young man’s face, and he exclaimed:

“Why, ’Lije, you’ve got it.”

“Yes, sir, I’ve got it.”

Well, then, in ’Lije’s language, they “clinched.” It was a happy, happy hug.

III: A GAME OF CASINO SPOILT

Opportunities make obligations. The Ephesian Christians must needs send their light out in every direction, or their candlestick would be removed. Appeals for instruction in the new faith came to them from afar. If they had failed to respond, they would have suffered what has come to every other Church and individual who has refused to let his light shine; the flame would have been extinguished.

A. H. TUTTLE, D.D.

III

A Game of Casino Spoilt

One of the dearest little surprises that I remember came to me down in the mountains of Alabama. I was looking through the supplementary matter of a new copy of my Unabridged Dictionary, when I took a notion to read the "Memoir of Noah Webster." I had worn out one copy of that dictionary without reading the Memoir, because I had an idea that it merely contained an account of a very laborious literary life, so I was not expecting anything uncommon, when all at once I was in the midst of a very sweet Christian experience.

In the year 1808 there was a revival on at New Haven, but Webster was so deeply engaged with literary labors that he did not attend, though he became aware of something unusual going on, by the uncommon tenderness displayed by the other members of his family. It took only a short time to ascertain the cause of this new warmth of sensibility. Webster was a believer in Christ, but had been content merely to live uprightly, without the experimental new birth. Now he went after that experience with characteristic thor-

oughness and was soon happy in a vital Christian hope. Then he realized his responsibility to his family and erected a family altar which remained a household institution until his death, in 1847. Shortly after his conversion, he and several other members of his family joined the Church.

This is a notable instance of the pervasive influence of the revival spirit. Here was a just man, pursuing the even tenor of his way, without any definite program, or even idea of the life in Christ. He was suddenly halted and forced to take stock of his spiritual belongings, merely because his family had become interested in religion, though none of them had mentioned that they were thus interested.

But Webster was with his family every day; Elijah Green was converted in a community which was in a condition of profound spiritual torpor. Yet his conversion was the result of revival influence. His story would not be complete without showing the hidden cause of his coming to Christ just when he did, and in the way he came.

That night when the light shone into his soul in answer to the prayer of Thomas Freeman and himself, and after they had moderated their ecstasy somewhat, the minister remarked:

“I like to see your kind of an experience. You

have worked through to a blessing at a time when there is not a breeze in the spiritual air at this place. The churches seem to me to be especially stagnant, just now. It makes your case somewhat remarkable." 'Lije did not think very much of this remark at the time, but he was forcibly reminded of it later.

At the time of these occurrences, 'Lije was corresponding with his mother, seven hundred miles distant in Indiana. He had told her of his friend, the Rev. Thomas Freeman, and of his arguments on religious subjects. A revival was in progress in his mother's home town, and one of the features of the meetings was for the attendants to make written requests for prayer for loved ones at a distance. 'Lije's mother sent his name up for prayer every night, and asked that the minister with whom he was intimate might be the instrument of his conversion. But she had not mentioned this in her letters to Elijah. It was several years afterwards that he was back in his home town, and a deeply pious lady friend of his mother said:

"'Lijey, there was a big shout went up in our meeting here, when we heard that you were so happily converted, in answer to our prayers."

"Why, Aunt Kitty, how was that? I never heard that before."

"Did your mother never tell you of it? Why,

you see, your mother handed in your name every night for prayer. And she asked us to pray that a Rev. Thomas Freeman might be instrumental in your conversion. And sure enough, before our meetings closed, here came a letter from you, stating that you had been converted in his study while he was praying. I am surprised that your mother never mentioned it to you." 'Lije musingly replied:

"Mother has become so habituated to having her prayers answered that she takes an answer as a matter of course, perhaps."

But going back to that superlative night:

After an hour of very sweet communion with Freeman, Elijah started, the time still being early, for his home, a mile away. He was a mere hired hand, but he was treated as a member of the family, in which he was a general favorite. As he went along the street, he seemed to want to seize every one whom he met, and tell him:

"Say, Brother, I've found Jesus."

But after a while he came in sight of the house. Somehow his courage did not seem so great as when he was walking along the streets. He saw a light in the great kitchen and knew that the family were all in there. He reflected that he could go directly to his room from the hall entrance, and he weakly resolved that he

would do so. But when he opened the hall door, he heard the voice of Frank Sylvester in the kitchen say:

“Here comes ’Lijey. He will deal the cards in great shape for us.”

You see, ’Lije had learned to play cards in the Army. He had introduced the game of Casino to the Sylvesters. Both of the parents were members of the church, but just at that time were tinctured with the error that there was no harm in cards at home. ’Lije had principally argued them into this position. Frank, Mary, and Nellie Sylvester had often whiled the evenings away at Casino, with Elijah Green for an instructor.

While our new convert stood there in the hall, after hearing Frank say that he would deal the cards, a revulsion of feeling swept through him. He conceived a violent dislike for cards, which has increased as the years have gone by. Again he thought eagerly of escaping upstairs. As he stood undecided, Frank threw open the door of the kitchen which opened into the hall, showing Mr. Sylvester reading at one end of the dining table; Mrs. Sylvester at work with the baking; and the three young people at the other end of the table, with the cards. Elijah’s whole soul arose in loathing against those cards, as Frank gayly exclaimed:

“Sit down, 'Lije, and take a hand with us. We are so miserably awkward, shuffling and dealing the cards.”

Now 'Lije, early in his Army experience, had decided that he was not cut out for a gambler, and for strictly prudential reasons had avoided the gaming table. At the same time, he had spent hours sitting with a deck of cards in his hands, riffing and shuffling them, playing Solitaire. He had also played this game of Casino with his buddy. No harm had come to him from cards, because there was no fascination in gaming for him. He preferred a book or magazine.

But now it was squarely up to him to play or not to play cards after he had professed the religion of Jesus Christ. He had argued that there is no harm in cards at home, but sitting there with those innocent young people, whom he had taught to play this game, it suddenly occurred to him:

“Cards are the gambler's most convenient tools. There are ten dollars lost at cards, to one dollar at any other game. In the name of honesty and sanity, why make the home the nursing place of this awful evil? I have called Casino an innocent game, but it seems to have a fatal fascination for these young people. Maybe I have started them on the gambler's road to hell.”

So Elijah sat with these reflections, mechanically riffing the cards, trying to make up his

mind how to approach the subject of the wrong in card playing. Frank peevishly exclaimed:

“Go on and deal the cards, 'Lije; you have them thoroughly mixed.”

“I'll deal you folks a hand, but I believe that I will not play to-night,” said 'Lije, as he deftly distributed the cards to the others.

At this, both the old folks glanced toward 'Lije. Frank seized the cards that were dealt and, giving them back, banteringly said:

“Here, 'Lije, deal yourself a hand. You must play with us. We will never get anywhere, playing among ourselves.”

The riffing was resumed, and was watched with great interest by the old folks. 'Lije knew that he ought to confess Christ then and there, by repudiating the game, but oh, how hard it was! At last, Frank impatiently cried:

“Deal the cards, 'Lijey Green; deal the cards. Are you going to sleep?”

It was now or never. 'Lije lifted the cards above his head and threw them toward the kitchen stove. They fell in fifty-two different places, and 'Lije said, very soberly, and without the least appearance of cant:

“So help me God, I'll never play another game of cards.”

Then Mrs. Sylvester dropped the pan of bread she was taking from the oven, and Mr. Sylvester

nearly knocked the table over, getting to his feet. He seized one of Elijah's hands, and shouted aloud. She gathered up the scattered cards, stuffed them into the stove, and almost hysterically made for Elijah, who was now thoroughly happy. He gave her his other hand, and jumping up and down between the two, sang out joyfully:

"Oh, gentle people, I've found Jesus."

"I knew it already, 'Lijey. I suspected it, even before you threw the cards. Poor boy; I could see that you were having a hard time to stand for the right. But you triumphed at last, 'Lijey. And you've preached the biggest sermon to-night that ever I listened to. And you had only a deck of cards for a text. If Mr. Sylvester and I had been as firm as you, they would never have come into the house."

'Lije now turned to the young people. He expected a sympathetic attitude from them, but it was evident that they were "put out," notwithstanding they were all three professed Christians. But they had joined the Church because it was the genteel and popular thing to do. They knew nothing of the soul-searchings and heart-burnings which had swept through Elijah Green's nature. But they had begun to feel the infatuation of cards, the most serious deflection from the path of rectitude that they had ever made. It had

seemed so harmless that they had grown quite complacent about it. Then there was an indefinable resentment against Elijah for what appeared to them like superiority over them, as Christians. Why, he had professed religion just that night; it was decidedly "fresh" in him to arrogate authority over them in a little harmless amusement. With freezing civility, Frank said:

"I'm real glad, 'Lije, that you have turned over a new leaf. I guess that you will have a few other things, besides Casino, to reform on."

"Reform, Frank? Why, bless your life, I have no desire at all to do anything that is liable to cause any one to stumble."

The girls were not so sarcastic as Frank, but they were plainly "miffed." Elijah did not notice it much, because he was so happy in his new life. When he had again taken his seat, Mr. Sylvester asked him to relate his experience. It took more than an hour, but as he went through the door toward his room, Sylvester remarked:

"If I am any prophet, you will be preaching before this time next year."

"Well, that is what my parents consecrated me for, when I was eight days old. My father himself baptized me that day, by my mother's bedside, and they solemnly gave me to God."

The fact was, that Green was licensed at the next District Conference, in May, and he entered

an Annual Conference the following September.

'Lije was immediately in the midst of controversy. His intensely militant disposition seemed to abhor peace and quiet as Nature abhors a vacuum. He enjoyed meeting his old comrades in skepticism and confuting their arguments. He at once formulated the dictum about things in the Bible which he did not understand:

“I allow God to know a great many things I don't know.”

But it hurt him to find the Church palliating and excusing things which he knew were obstructing the advance of the Kingdom.

The next Sunday he joined the Broadway M. E. Church in town, and that day a number of the town folks came out to visit the Sylvesters.

Mr. and Mrs. Crowder, two of these visitors, had been invited by the young people of the Sylvester family. They were well-to-do, and extremely respectable. They took themselves very seriously, and doubted the propriety of any one disagreeing with them on any subject whatever.

Of course it was inevitable that they and Elijah should get into a discussion on the subject of amusements. In fact, Frank and Nellie and Mary had invited them with this express wish. So, at the dinner table, they related Elijah's “first sermon”, as they were already calling his repu-

diation of the game of cards. Mrs. Crowder very impressively remarked:

“I often think of what an old presiding elder back in Indiana used to say.”

“What was that?” asked Nellie Sylvester.

“He said that some young converts put him in mind of young wasps—biggest just after they are hatched.” This ought to have squelched Elijah, but he never could understand when the proper time had come to subside. He answered pleasantly:

“It would seem as though that is especially true in my case. I can only hope that I may keep up the pace with which I have started. You see I am twenty-five, and I must go hard to catch up with most folks in the Christian life, because the great majority of them started before they were eighteen. I am asking the Lord to lengthen my days so that I may serve Him as long as I worked for the other fellow.”

“Let me see,” ponderously interposed Mr. Crowder. “I believe that the discussion related to the harmless game of Casino. I trust that that was the very worst thing you ever did while you were serving the ‘other fellow’.”

“You see, Mr. Crowder, I argued that matter all through to my entire satisfaction, all to myself. My conscience suddenly became very

tender about doing anything that would make my brother stumble. But I was very greatly gratified when I found that the Discipline reprehends cards. I feel now that I am ecclesiastically on the right track, as well as conscientiously."

"Yes, I know what the Discipline says; but I regard it as a tyranny which I am not obliged to respect."

"Why, as to that, a saloon keeper can say the same when he sells liquor to an Indian or a minor."

"I consider the cases quite dissimilar," said Mr. Crowder, with dignity. "Now it is my honest belief that we are too strict on our children." (Crowder was childless, but of course he was speaking in a general way.) "I am satisfied that if we will let them have the amusements at home which so many of them have to seek elsewhere, these amusements away from home would not have the charm for the young people which they seem to possess."

"Now that would be a matter of statistics. So far as I know, there are no statistics available to prove or refute your contention. But I believe that I can get statistics that ought to set the matter at rest."

"How will you go about that?"

"In my old company in the Army, the soldiers play cards to a man. I have a very intelligent

friend there—John Robbins—who will go to the pains of taking the statistics. I shall ask him to ask every man in the company: First, Did you learn to play cards at home? Second, If you did so learn, has it been easier, on that account, for you to avoid gambling here in the Army? If you did not learn to play cards in the Army, how would you like for your home folks to know that you are gambling here in the Army? Now such statistics ought to show that not a single out-breaking gambler learned to play cards at home, because, according to your belief, such boys will have learned to regard the game with indifference, and it will have no influence over them. I shall prepare my letter immediately after dinner, so as to show it to you before you leave for home.”

Green already knew that Orth and Noble, two of the inveterate gamblers of “I” Co., ’Steenth Infantry, had learned to play cards at home, where, they had told him, they had formed their passion for gaming. But he was scarcely prepared for the answer that came from Robbins. His soldier friend told him that every man who professed to having learned cards at home was now a confirmed gambler. Orth was the king-bee and generally had 75 per cent of the money in the company within a week after payday. Noble was an honest gambler, who played merely

for the excitement of gaming. Robbins went on to say that the indifferent gamblers, and those who played for fun only, said that they would not like for their folks at home to know how they were living. Elijah showed these data to Mr. Crowder. It was a delicate undertaking, for Elijah did not care to antagonize the man, but he came off successfully. After jollyng along for a while, Crowder exclaimed:

“’Lijey, the statistics fail to support my position. As you say, it is a matter of statistics, and not of opinion. You have won fair and square. I wouldn’t have believed any such showing possible. I shall no longer maintain the position I took at Sylvester’s.”

IV: CONTRASTED CONVERSIONS

One saved soul going after an unsaved soul with yearning heart and eager step and tender entreaty—this is the Christian's unspeakable privilege.

BISHOP BERRY.

IV

Contrasted Conversions

The Rev. Elijah Green entered Conference on trial in September, 1874. He asked for the hardest circuit in the Conference, and received it. I have related some of the things which befell him in the First Chapter. The second year he asked for and received another hard circuit. These circuits, pioneer work on what was then the frontier of Methodism, and which failed to support one single man, now contain several circuits, all supporting ministers at good salaries. Green became fascinated with the work and wished for no better fortune than to go on serving country charges until the day of his death.

But it was hard to take a circuit, work for a year, receive \$75 to \$100 from the Home Missionary Society; perhaps that much from the work; and get along without going in debt. At the end of the second year, Green found himself in debt \$40, notwithstanding the most rigid economy.

He went to Conference, passed his examination, was received into full connection, ordained Deacon, and was then placed on the super-

numerary list at his own request. He did this in order to take charge of the advertising branch of a new business affair with which he had become acquainted late in his second year's ministry. This project consisted in setting on foot a hog cholera remedy in the states of Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio. He received $66 \frac{2}{3}$ per cent of the proceeds for two years. At the end of the contract, he had \$25,000 in the bank; had studied his books for the third and fourth years; had attended two big meetings; and now asked to be returned to the effective list. This was in another Conference. He again asked for the hardest work the cabinet could name in a central western Conference.

When Elijah was admitted on trial, the Conference associated him with a man only three years his senior, who had been preaching for eight years. From this minister, Green got the following story, substantially as it is related here:

A SKEPTIC COMES ACROSS

“Well, Gurley, you have to admit that the lives of Christians show the heavenly origin of their religion. You have a greater confidence in a man, merely because he professes the religion of Jesus Christ.”

“I’ll take you on that very point, Hamilton. Who prays a longer prayer than old Brother White? Pious to a fault. But you know that he owns all of the saloon property in Milltown. Then there is Class Leader Moss. I doubt whether he would pick up a pin on Sunday; but he swindled you out of lots of good money, when he got \$150 for that sorry brute you are riding. And you know several who are no better than these two, though they all make a loud profession of religion.”

The two young men jogged on in silence for some time. Hamilton was not convinced—only silenced. He made no profession of religion, but he held it in veneration, and it really pained him for his friend Gurley to argue against religion, as he had been doing all day. They had journeyed from Milltown, their native place, together, and were now a thousand miles from home. A boundless Iowa prairie stretched away on every side. They were nearing the town where Gurley expected to practice law and Hamilton medicine, but as yet, not a house was in sight—western Iowa, in the sixties, was a different country from the Iowa of to-day. Gurley was on the point of renewing his attack, when Hamilton exclaimed:

“Look! There’s a house.”

After a careful scrutiny of the horizon up the trail, Gurley remarked that it probably was a house.

"I'll be glad of it," sighed Hamilton. "My horse is too badly used up to go on to Wingolia to-night. Judging by the last opinion we got, it must be twelve miles to town, and the sun is nearly down."

It was nearly dark when the travelers reached the house which they had sighted an hour before. It was a newly constructed "shanghai," and in front of it stood the four occupants, apparently a man and wife, and their son and daughter. These people were unkempt and forbidding in appearance, and it seemed an unlikely place to spend the night.

"How far is it to Wingolia?" asked Gurley.

"It must be ten miles," replied the elder of the men.

"Can we make it?" inquired Gurley of Hamilton, with an apprehensive glance at his beast.

"There's a good moon," hesitated Hamilton, who was troubled with the same doubts Gurley had about stopping. The young man had lounged around to Hamilton's side of the road and was eyeing his horse keenly.

"The moon won't do this hoss no good. He's needin' rest. Better stay here all night." Hamilton readily assented to this, but Gurley shot a

glance of disapproval at the young fellow, as the father added heartily:

“Yes, strangers, git down an’ picket your hosses, an’ stay all night. Then you can take your time to go to Wingolia in the morning.” This brought Hamilton to the ground, and Gurley reluctantly followed. After feeding and picketing the horses, they entered the house, the host remarking:

“We’ve already et our suppers. You’ll have to put up with what’s left.”

The untidy dishes and débris of the meal; the disarranged room; the unswept floor—all appeared uninviting. Everything seemed dirty. They ate sparingly and retired soon afterwards. The young man took them to a stairway out of doors, and said:

“Go upstairs and take the bed you will see near the door. I’d give you a light, but we hain’t made no candles yet this Fall. But the moon will shine right in at the door.”

Upstairs, by the bed, the young men looked at each other with troubled faces. Gurley, in a low voice, spoke first:

“I believe that we are in a den of thieves.”

“So do I.”

“I’m not going to undress.”

“Neither am I.”

Possibly you have been there yourself, gentle

reader—judging honest people by appearances. They had traveled a thousand miles to reach this point, but had always managed to stop in some reputable hotel or road house. A panic gradually took possession of them. As they sat there, the situation became more and more unbearable. At last Hamilton whispered:

“Let’s slip downstairs and stay with the horses until we are better satisfied.”

So they noiselessly descended the stairs and went to the horses, out on the prairie, a quarter of a mile from the house. They stretched their ample saddle blankets on the grass, and, putting on their overcoats, they lay down, with their saddles for pillows. It was early in September, and a glorious night. They lay quiet for a long while, watching the light in the shanghai window. Hamilton was just dozing off, when Gurley kicked his shin and sharply inquired:

“What’s that I hear?” Hamilton was wide awake in a moment and intently listening.

“They are singing at the house, Gurley.”

“They are singing ‘Sweet Hour of Prayer’.”

“Let’s go to the house and listen.”

They started for the house on a run. When they drew near, they slowed down and got to the window, where they stood looking in at a beautiful scene—the sight of a Christian family at household devotions. The four made a splen-

did quartet. The mother's strong treble carried the air; the daughter sang a mellow alto; the boy growled a deep bass; the father had a magnificent tenor voice. They were just starting the last stanza:

“Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,
May I thy consolation share,
Till from Mount Pisgah's lofty height,
I view my home, and take my flight.
This robe of flesh I'll drop and rise
To seize the everlasting prize;
And shout, while passing through the air,
Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer.”

At the close of the hymn, the father read the Fifth chapter of Matthew and led in a tender prayer of thanksgiving that God had reunited them, after a separation of months. He was very grateful for the Providence which had smiled on the labors of the son, while the father had been back to Illinois, bringing the mother and daughter to their new home. He asked to be kept true to their God. Then he asked his Heavenly Father to bless the two young men under their roof. He expressed the fear that they were not religious, but pleaded for God to bring them to a realization of all his mercies and goodness, and to the foot of the cross of Christ. Then he asked that the family might be of some benefit to the

cause of Christ in that part of the world and closed.

The two eavesdroppers now looked in each other's faces, and Gurley whispered:

"What fools we were; let's go back to bed."

"Not if your argument to-day was correct. The mere profession of religion by a person is no sign that he is not a villain, deep-dyed. And remember, you gave me instances to prove your contention."

"Yes, I know what I did. I gave you examples of wolves in sheep's clothing. Those folks in there are God's lambs. And please His grace, I'm going to be one, too."

So the two travelers sneaked back to bed. It was strange how differently everything appeared next morning. The head of the family had a most benignant, patriarchal look; the mother was a sweet-faced Madonna; the daughter was a pure, lovely virgin; the son was an upstanding, clear-eyed, manly young fellow. Now that the suspicions of the previous evening were all dissipated, it was incredible to those men that they had doubted these people.

It seemed that the father and son had come to this land the previous fall; had built the house during the winter; had put in a crop during the spring; that then the father had returned to

Illinois for the women folks, while the son had finished the crop; that the father and mother and daughter had reached there in the middle of the previous afternoon.

When it came time for morning devotions, the father said, as he took the Book:

“Will one of you read a chapter for us?”

“No, sir,” responded Gurley. “We are not worthy. You read, and mention me in your prayers, sir.”

“And pray for me, also,” added Hamilton, heartily.

“Have you anything special you would like to sing?”

“Do you know:

“Savior, let thy pitying eye
Call back a wandering sheep?”

“Yes, we know it well.”

“Please sing it, then.”

Mr. Jones had intended to read the Twenty-third Psalm, but he changed his mind while they were singing and selected the Fortieth Psalm. While he was reading how God lifted David's feet up from the miry clay and placed them on the Rock, Gurley passed up to the Rock. Just as they were kneeling, he said gently:

“Excuse me, Brother Jones, but I want very

much to lead in prayer, after all. I am a different man from what I was when you started to read that chapter.”

Gurley's prayer was a thanksgiving for the family altar, and especially for this one. He was very happy, but a man of speech, so he was able to keep his thoughts in motion and to clothe them in the right language. It was like a prairie fire. All of the others, except Hamilton, led in prayer, before they arose from their knees.

Elijah Green remarked, in relating this incident, that it so often happens that an out-breaking skeptic will get into the Kingdom ahead of a nominal believer, when they both start at the same time. But Hamilton was mightily saved that day, while they were riding along on the last lap of their long journey from Ohio.

Hamilton dropped medicine the next fall and entered the ministry. Gurley became one of the strongest laymen in the State, and died in triumph.

RECORD SHORT TIME IN CONVERSION

In the second year of his supernumerary relation, Elijah once found himself in a nice little city of central Indiana, during a revival. The crowds in attendance could not secure admission, so that the vestibules, the class rooms, and even

the sidewalks were crowded. Elijah shortly became employed on the sidewalk, talking religion, and led many to the altar for prayer.

One evening, he accosted a young man on the outskirts of the crowd:

“Brother, are you studying about your salvation?”

“Yes, sir; and I want salvation very much.”

“Have you been to the altar?”

“No, sir; this is the first time I have been to the meeting.”

“Come and go with me to the altar.” They were standing where they could see right up the auditorium to the chancel. Just at that moment some one was converted, and the crowd surged up and filled the aisle. The young man replied:

“It would be very hard for me to get to the altar. Is it necessary for me to go there?”

“No, indeed; one place is as good as another. The advantage in the altar is, that there are many people up there to pray for you.”

“It doesn’t seem that it will be very hard for me to get religion, so I don’t think I need very many to pray for me.”

“Suppose we kneel right here on the sidewalk.”

“I think there are some fellows around here that might disturb us.” Then, tentatively: “If we could only find some private place where we may pray together.”

“All right; let’s go down the street among the freight cars.”

It was only two blocks to the railroad, where a number of empties were standing idle. They went in between two tracks full of cars and knelt on the ground. With great simplicity, the boy said:

“Now, God, you know me, and you know I want religion. You know I have been a pretty tough fellow, but you know that I cut out all of the tough business this afternoon. I want salvation. I see that it will be pretty hard to keep straight without religion. I don’t seem to know very well how to talk to you, so I have brought this gentleman along, and I’ll let him put the thing up to you in proper shape.” Then Elijah prayed:

“O God, thou hast said, ‘Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.’ Help this man to understand that right this very minute. Fact is, there doesn’t seem to be any need for delay.” Here the suppliant interrupted:

“Why, no, God. If you said that, it looks to me like the next move is up to you. Oh, stranger, He has done it! He has done it! I am all right. Hurrah for Jesus!”

They shortly made their way back to the meeting, praising God, in their several ways, for his goodness. Elijah ascertained that his new-found

friend had been convicted only that afternoon. He had not been reared religiously, so he was all at sea as to the procedure. He had come to the meeting for the purpose of going to the altar, but the house was crowded before his arrival, and he was wandering on the outskirts of the crowd when he met Elijah. Now that he was converted, he was very eager to find out all possible about his new life. Elijah gave him his own Testament and advised him to read the book of Mark first, and, if possible, at one sitting. The minister saw the convert about six months afterwards in an adjoining town, where he had gone to a Y. M. C. A. Convention. He was greatly pleased to meet his guide into the Heavenly Way. He said:

“I know something more about religion than I did the night I first met you. I was so raw at that time, I wonder how I ever found God.”

“I have thought several times that that was the reason you found Him so easily. Your only thought was salvation, and that mighty quick. With nothing to distract your attention, you ran right into the Kingdom.”

Elijah says that he believes this conversion to be the record short case, to his knowledge. I cited the case of Saul of Tarsus, but Elijah replied that Saul was convicted, and was then three days under conviction. Undoubtedly Elijah's mind

was directed to the right Scripture in his prayer between the freight cars.

A TEN YEARS' QUEST

A case in sharp contrast to the foregoing occurred at a meeting at old Pennington's Chapel, where the pastor asked Elijah to preach for him during a two weeks' service. At this meeting, one young man came to the altar every night. He had been reared in the Church; had always gone to Sunday school and prayer meeting; never missed Circuit Preaching; was strictly moral; but had no evangelical knowledge of Christ.

Elijah was very busy in this meeting, during the altar exercises, helping, advising, praying with many different persons, so he had only an altar acquaintance with this seeker.

The last meeting of the series had come. Several had been converted; the benediction had been pronounced; the greater part of the people had left the house; but this young John Hoagland was still at the altar. Elijah stooped down to his ear, and whispered:

"John, nearly every one has left the house; wouldn't you better rise to your feet?" Hoagland arose, and the minister clasped hands with him across the chancel rail.

“Oh, Brother Green, why is it so hard for me to get to Jesus? Two hundred have been saved here, and I am still seeking.”

“I am sure that I don’t know, John, just what is the reason you are not satisfied. Maybe you have, in some way, been prescribing to yourself precisely how the blessing shall come. Perhaps you think there is a special efficacy in this particular place. But you are in earnest about it, and will be gloriously saved some day, somewhere. And John, allow me to say this: The thing you are hunting for is worth a lifetime of search. If you should find Jesus precious to your soul only one hour before you die, that hour remaining will compensate for all of the sorrow you will have endured in the search. Now good-bye. We may never meet again on earth, but I trust that we shall meet again in heaven.”

The busy scenes and cares of Elijah Green’s active life after that night entirely obliterated the circumstance from his memory. Ten years afterwards, a dear friend who lived some dozen miles from Pennington’s Chapel wrote him a letter, in which she said:

“Last Sunday, a new member came to our class at Sharp’s Mills, from Pennington’s Chapel. He was at Class Meeting in the afternoon and made a talk something as follows:

“Ten years ago last November, I was in a

meeting at Pennington's Chapel, run by a minister by the name of Elijah Green. I went to the altar at every opportunity, without finding peace. On the last day, a Sunday, Brother Green, while holding my hand, told me never to give up the search, and if I should be a lifetime seeking, and find religion only an hour before I should die, there would be enough joy in that one hour to compensate for all the sorrow I might endure in the search. Well, I sought for ten years. One day last spring, I was meditating on my condition, when I said, quite offhand, but very sincerely: "Lord, it makes extremely little difference to me how you save me, just so I am saved." And do you know, just then salvation came. Oh, how happy I was! The words of Brother Green, that one hour of conversion would make up for all the sorrow I would suffer in getting to Christ, came so gloriously true.' "

How very little we know about what we are saying and doing! Here was a minister of God, in labors abundant, saying a thing which he immediately forgot, but which sank deep in another human consciousness. Through ten years, those words clung to the memory of him to whom they were spoken. By mere good fortune, the minister's friend was present, when Hoagland related his experience at Sharp's Mills. Thus the min-

ister learned of the consummation of the event for which he had prayed so many years before. How many influences of his life are there of which he will never hear in this world? Well, what is the difference if he never hears in this world?

A CIRCUS CLOWN AND A GOOD BOY

Among all of the irreligious classes with whom I have come in contact, I believe that actors would be the most susceptible to religious influences—as a class. I was on a morning paper once, in a small city, where I had the task of “writing up” the constantly changing features of the theatrical programs. But I found myself more interested in the actors’ private lives than in their public careers. I shortly came to believe that actors, as a class, are irreligious on account of the dissipating influences with which they are surrounded. Their profession, in its legitimate practice, is a friend of morality and religion, but the dissolute environment of the stage has debauched it.

These reflections were started in my mind when I heard the horrific experience of Silvertop, a circus clown, and the friend of Elijah Green.

This clown was a man of domestic tastes, re-

finer sensibilities, strong religious convictions, and earnest moral tendencies. But he was never two nights in the same place, and his intimates in the circus business never inclined him to matrimony and a family.

The coarse, garish life which he led suppressed nearly all refinement; while skepticism had no place in his system—or lack of system, he had no opportunity for the cultivation of his spiritual nature; the prevailing looseness broke down his moral fiber.

Yet Silvertop loathed his life. He wanted a wife in a home with pictures and books and music. He wanted to go to church on Sunday; to be a decent, God-fearing member of society in some settled place of abode. But he must make the people laugh, when his own heart was full of tears. The tragedy of it!

The almost inevitable result was a resort to drink. The only part of his spiritual heritage that had not been squandered was the memory of a sainted mother, and the badly frayed Testament she had given him when he left home. This he frequently read as the caravan was slowly moving from place to place.

But the drink habit grew upon him, and he grew less and less reliable. He was “fired” at last, and left in a little country town. He did not stay longer than it would take him to get to-

gether money with which to go to a near-by city, where he "slowly descended the drunkard's stairway to the nethermost hell."

But not without many manful attempts to recover sovereignty over himself did he go down so low. Several times did he "climb out of the pit by digging finger- and toenails in its slimy sides." At last he could "no longer procure liquor, because he no longer had money." He went into a delirium in which snakes writhed about his body and limbs, toads glimmered before his eyes, and the cavernous jaws of alligators yawned in front of him. After forty-eight hours of this agony, he came to himself in a hospital ward. Of course, his first request was for liquor, but it was refused. And then again he suffered "the agonies of the damned."

After a time, he recovered lucidity. A kindly man, of a benignant and wholesome countenance, stood beside him. Silvertop was only vaguely sane, so he inquired:

"Are you the Lord Jesus?"

"Indeed, no. But I hope I am a follower of His; however unworthy I am, that says so. Mayhap I can do something for you in His name."

"Do you guess that you could help me out of this torment with a prayer?"

"I can try, at least. And be you full of faith

that the Lord will give you what you want.”

Then the suppliant reminded Christ very earnestly of how he had been in the same deplorable state as this poor sufferer, and of how His all-powerful blood had cleansed him from the sin of intemperance. The earnestness and sincerity of his tones impressed the poor, bedeviled Silvertop. He was soothed and helped, but he did not, at that time, get the assurance of victory. His new friend asked him if he thought he could go to a Gospel Temperance meeting that night. Silvertop said that he would try. After promising to send some one for him, the clown's new-found friend departed.

When Silvertop arrived in the vast auditorium where the meetings were in progress, he saw his friend of the afternoon seated on the platform. He whispered to his guide:

“Who is the man on the platform that sent you for me?”

“Oh, he is an Irishman, by the name of Murphy.”

“Not Frank Murphy, the temperance lecturer?”

“That same. And he will lecture to-night.”

Then Silvertop heard his own case nearly duplicated by the experience of Murphy, and at the close he signed the pledge “with malice toward none; but with charity for all.” He asked

Jesus to help him keep the pledge, which He did, until the end. He went onto the lecture platform himself, and did great good. He settled in a conservative old community, married a winsome girl, and died in great peace, with his wife, two children, and many friends around him.

Elijah Green was present one evening at a meeting held by Silvertop. He related his experience with the drink demon as graphically as it can be fancied. He was followed on the program by a young man whom Elijah had induced to apply for a license to preach. Elijah was pretty intimate with this boy, but was not prepared for the speech which he made, substantially as follows:

“I am always inclined to look askance at my own Christian experience, when I hear men like Brother Silvertop tell how wonderfully they were saved from sin. My knowledge of sin is all hearsay. I do not know the taste of any alcoholic beverage. I have never told a lie; I have never profaned the name of God; I have never broken the Sabbath. I have always dealt honestly with my fellowman; I never took so much as the value of a pin from any one, by fraud. While I have sometimes been obliged, by force of circumstances, to listen to obscene language and to talk that is off color, I get away from such places as quickly as possible. My thoughts of my sainted

mother's sex have always been pure, and, in consequence, so have my actions.

“On the other hand, I do not remember when I was converted. Having no sudden, cataclysmic halt in a career of sin, I wonder sometimes if I really have been converted. But such thoughts linger only for a moment in my mind. For when I look carefully into my nature, I find all of the potentialities of wickedness lying there, controlled and powerless under the blood of Christ.

“Is it necessary for me to put my finger on the date when the blood of Christ began to atone for me? If it is necessary, I am still in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. But if I feel the witness of the Spirit to the application of the blood, why inquire as to when it was applied? Between you and me, I am not interested as to the when, although I am glad of the fact.

“It might be thought by some that I cannot properly sympathize with Brother Silvertop, but it seems to me that I can. I feel so sorry for him on account of his great temptations and trials, that if it were necessary, in order to shield him from further temptation, that I must carry him in my arms, I would, for the sake of his soul, undertake the task. I want to shield every young man in this community from like dangers. And, although I never have wanted to drink intoxicating liquors—never expect to have the least desire

to do so—I shall try to be the first one to sign the pledge, when it is presented to-night.”

That night Green was the guest of Isaac Sands, who had reared this local preacher who had made this extraordinary speech. As they were sitting around the evening lamp, he remarked:

“That was a singular speech of Tommy’s, to-night.”

“But singular as you say it is, it is not more so than the facts it related,” was the response.

“Then you believe all that he said?”

“With all my heart. I took Tommy to raise at the age of ten years, when his father died, and I have never known of his making the least step out of the path of rectitude. What is there singular about it? Was not John the Baptist filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb?”

“And I had nothing to add,” Elijah remarked, as he told the story. “More than that; I have casually found two other men with precisely the same story. One of them lived at Bartlett, Tenn., and the other at Fedora, S. Dak. If I had gone about looking for women with the same history, I presume that I might have found hundreds during the same time.”

V: RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE,
AND JOY

It is surely time for teachers of Christianity to recognize the fact that soft sayings about virtue, the poetic portrayals of a sentimental God who loves prayer and praise more than He loves righteousness are not likely to Christianize the world. There must be more iron in the blood of the Church.

BISHOP LEETE.

V

Righteousness, Peace, and Joy.

“Hello, there, Americus, come out to the gate a moment.”

“Hello, Parson, light and come in.”

“No, Americus, really I haven’t the time. I shall keep you only a moment.” The big woodsman, scarcely twenty, stuck his ax into the chopping block and lounged out to the gate. He affectionately twisted the fingers of his right hand in the mane of Green’s thoroughbred, squeezed the minister’s right knee playfully with his left hand, and waited.

“Americus, I have something very important to say and not much time to say it in. You know how much I want to stop this barn burning?”

“I know you seem to be interested in it right sharply.”

“Well, I’ve come to ask you to stop it.” The big fellow shot a keen glance at Green.

“How you reckon I can stop it?”

“I’m sure I don’t know exactly how, old man. But it’s your duty, as a good citizen, to put an end to this lawlessness. You are on good terms with the rough element, and I feel that in some

way you can get next to the men who are doing the dirt.”

“Do I look like a spy, Mr. Green?”

“Now, here, Americus, we must back-fire in this case. Somebody, with the devil in his heart, is in mighty low-down dirty business, destroying property. Somebody else, with the love of God in his heart, must catch that fellow with the devil in his heart. I say that you are the man for the job. I don’t know how you will do it, but I fully expect results in a week or two.”

“You sure have the master way with you, ’Lije. You took up correctin’ the rolls, church buildin’, repairin’, debt payin’, harnessed up the old wheel hosses an’ made ’em work. As the pastor, that was your duty. But this here matter belongs to the law. Seems like the sheriff is the one to order me onto this work.”

“He *is* the one; but he hasn’t moved in the matter, so I take it on myself. It’s as much my duty to see the law obeyed, as it is the duty of any other man. It is every good citizen’s duty, and surely a minister of God ought to be a good citizen. Now, Americus, I’m depending on you—don’t fail me.”

Here the Rev. Elijah Green touched up his horse and cantered down the road toward Brown’s Camp Ground. Doogan strolled thoughtfully

into the house and sat down in his bachelor quarters, where he could see the crayon portraits of his father and mother. Darkness found him there, looking at those pictures. Then he aroused himself and said:

“Well, ’Lije is dependin’ on me; I’ll not fail.” He now ate a few bites and went to bed. Before daylight he was on his way to the county seat, where the Grand Jury was in session.

At Brown’s Camp Ground, the minister found his building committee assembled on the dot. They had learned to be punctual with him. He stood before the pulpit and said:

“Brethren, we have talked away our day of grace on this thing of building a new church for a society of a hundred and fifty members, whose taxables amount, in the aggregate, to \$150,000. There is a particularly cunning devil in charge of affairs here—the devil of penuriousness. I fear that he will go not out, except by prayer. Let us pray.”

They knelt, and the minister, in an intimately affectionate manner, told their Heavenly Father how the forbears of these men had laid the foundations of a strong spirituality here in this old log meetinghouse. Their spirits were before The Throne, while their bodies lay in the ceme-

tery near at hand. Their work, for their time, was good, but it must be followed up by other good work in this day and time. Numbers had increased, and the needs of the people had grown in many ways. A new building was necessary, but the neighborhood was split into seven factions, so it seemed impossible to get the people together except with the compelling love of the All Father. Then, with melting fervor, he asked God to remove each of the various causes of trouble, carefully going over them seriatim, especially to take away all cupidity, selfishness, penuriousness from the hearts of these leaders. Soon the amens began to roll upward, but that shepherd held on, and prayed, and prayed, and prayed. At last, when he finished, and they were about to rise, while he was still on his knees, he said:

“Let us continue in prayer. Brother Frank Thomas, lead our prayers.” Never in his life did Brother Thomas want to pray quite so badly. He opened up by telling the Lord that there never was such a set of money lovers and money getters as the people of that church. He held himself the most culpable in the deadlock about building, because, financially, he was the ablest man in the church. He promised the Lord to do anything that the church might think was right. Then, one after another, each of the committee

was called upon to pray. They were an hour upon their knees. When at last they arose, the minister said:

“Now we are ready for business. Brother Gwarthmey, make a minute of the proceedings. Brother Thomas, what is your contribution?”

“I will put down one dollar on top of every dollar subscribed by those you appointed me to solicit.”

“To what will that amount?”

“If they were here this evening, it would be easy to raise a thousand dollars from them. I will guarantee five hundred.”

Green had selected for the building committee these seven men, representing seven factions in the society. The other six men guaranteed \$3,000. In the later Seventies of the last century, \$4,000 meant a building above the average of country churches. At the close, this hustler for God urged:

“Now, brethren, it will be necessary to get busy, so as to have a sum on hands by next Monday evening at seven o’clock large enough to enable us to make a building contract. It seems that we will have a building as good for these times as this house was for your forefathers’ day.”

It was Green’s practice to spend every night

possible in his bachelor quarters at the parsonage in Mockville; so he rode home that night.

As recorded elsewhere, he had been on the supernumerary list for two years, banking money on which to proceed, without hindrance in his loved work of the rural ministry, and on re-entering the effective ranks he had asked for the hardest work in the Conference. He had received this six-class circuit. He was preaching three times every Sunday; getting around the circuit for preaching and prayer meeting once in two weeks.

From the first, he had set a new pace for his people. When the officary had come to assess the salary for Green, he had said with finality that he asked only \$350, because there was so much required for benevolences, repair of churches, debt-paying, building, etc., that he wanted the salary fixed at a figure which could easily be paid. It was urged that it would look bad for the figures on the Annual Conference minutes to show a falling off on the assessment of salary. Green replied that they had assessed themselves \$500 the year before and had paid \$367.

“I would rather for you to promise me \$350, and pay me \$351, than for you to promise \$500, and pay only \$499.” Some one said:

“Let Brother Green have his way, even

though it does look bad." The minister retorted:

"It seems to me that it will look honest, anyhow." Thus the Rev. Elijah Green took the Decalogue to the Mockville Circuit.

The morning after the meeting at Brown's Camp Ground he was up at five; a plunge in the river; breakfast at the hotel; three hours of study; an hour's correspondence; dinner at the hotel; away to Livonia for its Tuesday night prayer meeting. At the close of this meeting, he started back to Mockville, in company with Brother Hurst, who lived out of town a half mile. When well out of town, Hurst remarked:

"I was up to Karaden to-day, attending circuit court. You might have knocked me down with a feather, when the grand jury returned that indictment against Americus Doogan."

"What indictment?" roared Green.

"Why, I supposed that you knew all about it. He says that you convinced him that he ought to confess to the burning."

"Has Americus been burning the barns?"

"He says he has. He is now in jail, but as happy as an angel, he says. He wants to stand trial, and pay the penalty."

"Oh, the poor boy. Why, Hurst, this is simply awful."

"I supposed that you advised him to plead guilty."

“Not I. Why, I had the greatest confidence in him. I went to him only yesterday, and told him that I wanted him to stop this barn burning.”

“Well, I guess he has stopped it, all right. But here is my lane. Good night.”

A short distance further, the parson came to a fork in the road, where the right prong led to Karaden, while the left went to Mockville. He took the right, and at midnight he went to bed in a hotel in a county seat, instead of the parsonage at Mockville. He was up early the next morning, and went to see William Tracy, the best lawyer in town. He employed him and asked:

“What can be done for this boy Doogan?”

“I don’t know anything, except to recommend him for clemency.”

“What will the penalty be?”

“Two years and upward in the penitentiary.”

“But in view of his contrition and confession, can we not get the barn owners satisfied, and keep him out of prison?”

“If he could and would pay for the property he has destroyed, and the owners of the property should ask for it, we might get the indictment quashed.”

“Well, I shall bring up every man who has suffered loss, and they will all ask for the indict-

ment to be quashed. When will his case be called?"

"To-day, probably. Doogan threw himself entirely on the court and declared that he would not employ counsel. But the court appointed my son Bob his counsel. Bob doesn't see any way out, except to plead for the clemency of the court. Americus says that he has been burning the barns of men who have wronged his parents or himself, but he now sees that he was all wrong. He has a little property and he wants it divided among the barn owners. He made quite a little speech and told the court that you had inadvertently convinced him of the wrong of the barn burning. He said:

" 'I want to reimburse the owners as far as possible for their losses, and then I wish to pay the penalty for the crimes.' "

"Well, when the case comes up, have it postponed until to-morrow. I shall then have all of the barn owners in court. Don't tell Americus that I have been here. I'll go straight down into the Buck Creek country. I am personally acquainted with every man who has been injured, and can influence all of them to let him off."

"I trust that you are not mistaken, Parson. I know those men, and am afraid you will have hard sledding."

“You’ll see. Good-by, till to-morrow.”

If Tracy had known the argument that Green was going to use with the barn owners, he would not have been so skeptical of his success.

Green was glad that he bestrode a good horse before he got to bed that night. Otherwise, he would not have seen all five of his men. He had learned the damage to each and had then asked:

“If I make good this loss with cash, will you ask the court to quash the indictment?” They had all acquiesced in this arrangement, taking his check in payment. He had enjoined secrecy on each and had stayed all night with Amos Turner, the last man he saw.

These men were present with Green in court when the case was called. The judge had been privately informed of what they wanted to do, so he did not call for the prisoner. The Tracys presented their petition to have the indictment quashed, and the prosecuting attorney moved that it be so ordered. The clerk made the necessary entry, after which the barn owners and Green left the court and went to the jail. Americus was astounded when he was told that he was free. Then his pastor sternly inquired:

“Americus, why have you, a member of the church, so shamefully abused my confidence?”

The boy replied:

“I joined the church and professed religion so

as to be on equal footing with these other hypocrites. They all belong to the church, but they all injured either my parents or myself. I saw that the church covered their dirt, so I used it to hide mine. But, 'Lijey, you convinced me that I was all wrong, even while you thought I was all right."

"Tell me, in the presence of these men, just what these wrongs are."

"You see, Parson, my father and mother were both good Christians, and they believed everybody else was like them. My father was a handy man in all of the woodworking trades. He could make barrels, furniture, coffins, and could build houses and barns. He got together some money and bought a piece of land. After he had put good buildings on it, Josh Hammond, here, sold him a sawmill for a small cash payment and his note, secured by a mortgage on the place. Dad worked hard at the mill, but lumber went down, and the mill, being well worn when he bought it, petered out. Dad asked for more time, but Josh foreclosed and got the place he is now living on, with the buildings.

"Dad scrapped the old mill for less than a hundred dollars and moved to Lavonia to open a cabinet shop with the fine walnut and other lumber, which he could not sell. Furniture was slow sale in a small place like Lavonia, so Dad,

working all the time, built up a fine stock, over and above the sales. He was on a dicker with a man in Karaden for a fair price for the whole stock, when Gus Connell comes along and offers him a herd of horses for it. The horses looked like a whole lot better trade than the Karaden man had been offering, so Dad took Gus up. Gus didn't tell Dad that he had lost a hoss the day before with the glanders. All but one died inside of a month.

“That left Dad depending on contract work. He built a house for Hank Woodell. A year passed without Dad getting a settlement from Hank, so Dad sued him on a mechanic's lien. It turned out that the house was on land belonging to Hank's wife. Dad ought to have sued her, but he said, ‘I hope I am too much of a gentleman to go to law with a lady.’

“Then Billy Woods pretended to give Dad an acre of land to build a house on. My mother died there, three year ago. You know, Parson, it's a mighty nice little home. It's right in the woods, but handy to the store, school, post-office, the meeting house, and other places. No deed ever passed, so when Dad died a little over a year ago, Billy told me he must have possession. I hated awful bad to give the place up, so I persuaded him to let me pay him for it with farm work. I worked six months for an acre of land

worth about twenty-five dollars before Dad built on it.

“After Mother’s death, Dad bought a peddling route, team and wagon from Amos Turner. He went along, paying on his outfit every month for a year, when one of the hosses died. Dad had paid about four-fifths of the purchase price, and had the best hoss of the team left. He wanted to swap the wagon for a one-hoss wagon, and go on peddlin’, but the note was due and Turner sued on the chattel mortgage and got the hoss an’ wagon.

“That seemed to take all the whey out of Dad, an’ he died a short time afterwards. While I was workin’ that six months for Billy Woods, I studied a lot on the skulduggery of these men and concluded I would get even with them. I kept friendly with them, an’ as I belonged to the church, nobody suspected me of barn burning. Of course, neither Dad nor Mother would have agreed to it. You arguing about it all the time thinking some one else was guilty, convinced me I ought to confess the crimes and suffer the consequences.”

These five men had stood with bowed heads while Americus had gone through with his merciless recital. At the close, there was a silent moment. Amos Turner first relieved the tension.

“So far as I am concerned, Parson, I won’t

have anything for my barn. Here is your check. Americus has told the truth about me. I see how he was trying to right his wrongs. It doesn't help my case any to know that he went about it in the wrong way. He is doubly orphaned, and having no one to advise him, he took vengeance himself, instead of leaving it to God." Now the rest of them gave their checks back to Green, Doogan slowly comprehending the part his pastor had taken. He burst out:

"'Lijey, did you pay these men for the barns I burnt?"

Green was speechless, for he had not wanted Doogan to know of what he had done. Billy Woods impulsively exclaimed:

"Yes, 'Mericus, 'Lijey saved you—"

"And all the rest of us," solemnly intoned Amos Turner. "He has saved us from sharp dealings and hypocrisy. For my part, I work righteousness from this day."

"And so will I," added all the others.

"Let us all go home to dinner with Americus. We can make it by riding a little hard. We will take along oysters, ham, and other stuff for a big spread—have a regular stag party. There won't be a woman in a quarter of a mile. Then we will drum up a big crowd for the prayer meeting at Rehobeth, to-night. I want to talk about righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy

Ghost. This people always had the joy, seemingly. But the Bible puts righteousness first, then peace, and *then* joy. We shall take righteousness and peace to the Rehobeth meeting to-night, and there will be joy a-plenty.”

It is small wonder that afterwards young Doogan placed the Rev. Elijah Green on the highest pedestal.

Rotterdam was a point on Green's Circuit situated in Rosey County, while the rest of the charge lay in Hendrix County. In all civic and commercial ways it was separate and apart from the other parts of the circuit. In May of his first year, Green went to Rotterdam for his regular Sunday evening appointment, with the asthma worrying him. He always remained in Rotterdam over Tuesday evening for prayer meeting, because it was so difficult to return to Mockville from that point. But when time came to return to Mockville on Wednesday, he was so sick that he could not stir out. He asked a friend to write to Uncle Hal Lucas, in Mockville, what was the matter. In those days, mail between little inland post-offices played queer freaks, and Uncle Hal did not get the letter.

Green did not get to Mockville until the next Wednesday. As he was riding into the village, he met and spoke to a little boy of ten, with

whom he was familiar. The boy returned his salutation with a stare and passed on. All whom he met showed incivility—no one spoke to him. Deeply troubled, he put up his horse, and sought Elkanah Jones, next door. Mr. Jones saw him through the windows, and stepping to the door, stood outside on the porch, truculent and uncivil.

“Kaney, do tell me what is the matter with the people in this place; I haven’t had a civil look since I entered the town.”

“Perhaps Americus Doogan can inform you—if you should find him sober enough,” curtly responded the neighbor.

“Where is Americus?”

“I saw him go into Whalley’s saloon, an hour ago,” said Kaney, as he turned and reëntered the house, closing the door after him.

The minister whirled and walked rapidly down town. He saw Doogan, unsteadily making his way along the opposite sidewalk. In a moment, the men faced each other. The minister impulsively seized the drunken man’s arm.

“Americus, old man, you’ve got to go home with me.” Doogan had recoiled at first, but that touch on the arm reached his heart, and he went along without a word. The man looked haggard, as well as drunk. The minister rightly surmised that he had been carousing and had not

slept lately, so he got him to bed. Shortly he was in a profound slumber.

It was noon, and Green ate a few bites from a store of things he kept in the house for emergencies. He could only wait, with his feelings in a turmoil. What *could* the matter be? At supper time, he again ate in the parsonage. At daylight on Thursday, Americus awoke.

“Good morning, Americus; have you had a good nap?”

“I’m in the parsonage—ain’t I?”

“Surely. Been here since yesterday. This is Thursday. Come, now; pull yourself together, and tell me how you came to get drunk.”

“Why, it was the report of your trouble over at Rotterdam.”

“You mean to say that my little attack of asthma threw you off your kazipp?”

“Now, here, Parson, Sam Billings was over to Greenmont, the day you was bound over, on your own recognizance, for a statutory offense against a girl twelve years old.”

In all of Green’s imaginings of what could be the matter, nothing like this had occurred to him. While the man lay asleep, he had said a thousand times:

“I must be calm when the blow comes. I must not allow my feelings to get beyond control.”

So, with all the powers of his soul, he mastered his impulses. But the effort stupified him for a moment, in which he sat vacantly staring at Doogan. At last, in a thin voice, he asked:

“Who is Sam Billings?”

“He is the owner of the sawmill on Buck Creek, about a mile above where you ford, going to Lavonia.” Then very wistfully, he added:

“Say, ’Lijey, tell me it ain’t so.”

“It is utterly false.” Then that big fellow groveled on the floor at the minister’s feet, which he caught in his hands and kissed.

“Oh, ’Lijey, ’Lijey, forgive me, forgive me. When you didn’t come to Rehobeth last Sunday afternoon, every one was wondering what was the matter. I rode down here Monday morning, to find out what was the matter. I met Sam Billings at the Buck Creek Ford and told him what I was coming down here for. He said that you had been taken from Rotterdam to Greenmont by the sheriff, and that he saw you there in court on Saturday. It jest nachelly upset me, Parson, an’ I come on down to Mockville in a whoop—been drunker’n a b’iled owl ever since.”

“Well, let’s have some breakfast; then I’ll go to see Mr. Billings.”

“All right; I’ll go with you.”

“No, I prefer to go alone. I shall be back in

an hour or two. You stay here in the parsonage. Don't go near the saloon."

"You needn't fear."

These men had frequently entertained each other at their bachelor quarters, when they "flew in" and helped each other with the housekeeping. Green preferred not to go down town for breakfast. His feelings had been cruelly hurt, and he shrank from meeting people who had lost faith in him, even on account of a falsehood. He would come back from Sam Billings's mill with a complete vindication, when every one's trust would be entirely restored and strengthened. At the table, Doogan tentatively inquired:

"What do you propose to do when you get to the mill?"

"Circumstances must govern the case. Maybe I shall feel under obligations to beat the devil out of Mr. Billings."

"Ain't that rough language for a preacher-man?"

"It is pretty rough. But when you come to think of it, it is not so bad as it sounds. We prayed the devil of penuriousness out of Brown's Camp Ground. The devil of falsehood must come out of Billings—what's the matter with knocking it out?"

After breakfast, the shepherd grimly mounted,

and started out to find the wolf who had torn his lamb.

Green had been gone scarcely a half hour, when a packet came down the river with the mail. The postmaster handed a letter to Hal Lucas, the spiritual patriarch of the village. This letter was postmarked "Rotterdam," and should have come over the route via Greenmont and Karaden. The old man read it and shouted to a large crowd assembled in the post-office lobby:

"All of you listen to this letter: 'Rotterdam, May 1, 1878. Dear Brother Lucas: Brother Green is sick, and the doctor says that he may not be able to leave here for a week. Fraternally, Charles Ringgold.' This letter was written a week ago yesterday. Where are we at?"

"We are right at the proposition that Sam Billings has told a extry big lie," said Jim Anderson. Immediately a great uproar arose. Instinctively, the crowd started toward the parsonage. Every one knew that the minister had taken Doogan home the day before, and that he had ridden out the Lavonia road that morning. But no one had seen Americus that day, and the liveryman said that his nag was still in the stable. When, in response to their call, Doogan appeared at the door of the parsonage, Lucas waved the letter and said:

“Americus, we have been all wrong about the preacher. He has been sick in Rotterdam. Where is he now?”

“He’s went to Billings’s mill to piously beat the devil out of Sam Billings for lying to me.”

Lucas exclaimed:

“Some of you fellows follow him quick. Sam’s too big a man for ’Lijey to tackle alone.” Several husky young men rushed off for horses, and Lucas continued solemnly:

“Now, the rest of us will go to the church and pray till Brother Green gets back to town. We must ask God to forgive us for doubting such a good man.”

When Green reached the mill, Billings was alone, filing his saw. Glancing up, he saw the minister tying his horse to the fence. He rose, greatly agitated.

“Now, Parson, I know what you’ve come for. Stay right there for a minute, an’ let me tell you all about this here business.” Green stood still, and Billings continued: “I know how Americus worships the ground you walk on, so I jest wanted to see how he would take sech a tale about you, expectin’ to correct it ’fore we separated. But the second he heerd it, he dug his heels into his hoss, an’ went toward Mockville like a crazy

man. I followed him to straighten it out, but was afraid to explain after I got there.”

“What were you afraid of?”

“Afraid the people would lick me. I never saw such excitement. Women an’ children screamed as though some one was dead. Old Hal Lucas swore like a pirate.”

“Well, you’ve only put off the licking to this present moment, for I’m going to lick you to an attenuated frazzle. You unbalanced the character of a man as a cold-blooded experiment, and you deserve the worst I can do for you.”

Green had forgotten his own wrongs in his hot indignation for the wrong that had been done Doogan. He took off his coat, vest, and collar, and climbed the fence. But Billings, a great fighter himself, made no move. Instead he said conciliatorially:

“There’s a better way to settle the thing, Parson. Anyhow, you don’t get any fight out of me.” Green had come close.

“Are you afraid?”

“No, sir, I’m not afraid; seein’ I weigh fifty pounds more’n you do, an’ I’ve scrapped men fifty pounds heavier’n I am. I’m nachelly ashamed of the whole thing, an’ want to do all I can before the public to make it right. I propose to go to Mockville, get the people together in the

church, an' let me tell 'em the plain straight of the thing. Now, if nothin' but a fight will suit you, it will be a one-sided fight, for I don't intend to lift my hand." After a moment, Green said:

"All right; get your horse, and we'll go to Mockville. But aren't you afraid to go there?"

"Not with you along."

They had gone but a short distance when they met the squad which Lucas had sent after Green. Billings explained, and they all returned to town together. They went directly to the church. The minister and the liar marched up the aisle together. Americus was on the front seat of the Amen corner. Green faced the audience:

"Brethren, there has been a misunderstanding. Mr. Billings will make everything clear." Billings said:

"Mr. Green is kind enough to call it a misunderstanding. The fact is that it is a plain, fine large lie out of whole cloth. I jest wanted to see how much faith Americus had in Mr. Green. I had no idee it would tear up things as it has. I ax all of your pardon. Most special I ax Americus's pardon. It was the lowest down, dirtiest lie I ever told. An', neighbors, I'm done with lyin'. I'll never tell another lie." Jim Anderson arose and said:

“Sam, you are such an awful liar, that we can hardly believe you when you say that you will never lie again.”

“I know that *generally* I have been a liar, but this time I’m telling the truth. I’ll never lie again.”

Green now entered the pulpit and preached a most searching sermon against falsehood. From that meeting a passion for righteousness spread over the entire circuit. Right in the busy corn-planting season, a revival started which brought numbers into the church to fill up the gaps where Green had cut out “dead timber.” He had been told that dropping so many names from the roll would look bad in the statistics; but the Mockville statistics showed up very well after all, in the Annual Conference minutes.

VI: WHEN ELIJAH FAILED

The safety of all we have is due to the churches, even in their present inefficient and inactive state. By all that we hold dear, let us from this very day give more time, money, and thought to the churches of our city, for upon these the value of all we own ultimately depends.

ROGER W. BABSON.

VI

When Elijah Failed

I introduced the Rev. Elijah Green to the reader on a railroad train in Wyoming, in the later years of his ministry. His work, related in other parts of this book, has fallen in different parts of the Union. Singular to relate, his "pile" was a bar to settlement for any length of time in any one Conference. He found several difficulties constantly cropping out, wherever it became known that he had \$1,000 a year income besides his salary as pastor. It had a tendency to pauperize his people; it worked hardship on his successors who could not lay off work on his liberal lines; it furnished excuses for delinquencies. So he was constantly on the move from one Conference to another. After a few years, he became so well acquainted with the general needs of the churches over the country that he knew just where he had better go. While he said that he took what the Bishop gave him, that was generally the hardest problem in the Conference where he had just moved—because the bishops came to know him and his penchant for difficult tasks.

This chapter will show Elijah on a frontier circuit between the great Sioux reservations on the east, and the Black Hills on the west. It was in a country where he had soldiered. He liked the rough-and-tumble, catch-as-you-can society of the region, and generally held his own in the numerous gusty encounters among the cowboys and early farmers of that country. But I am going to tell of one of his failures. It would be easy, like Peter Cartwright, to speak of his successes only, but that might leave the impression that he never failed, which would be contrary to the experience of my readers, contrary to history, and contrary to most romance.

Among the first friends that Elijah made was an upstanding, hard-riding, downright fellow by the name of McLeod, who owned the W. D. brand and ranch. McLeod was a good citizen, as citizens went in those days; never cheated at cards—nor allowed any one else to cheat where he was playing; hated sheep and sheep herders with a sort of religiosity; drank a little, but never got drunk—that is, he never lost control of his legs; had served on vigilance committees on occasions, but had prevented prejudice and personal spite from doing harm several times; would fight, when he had to, with vim and vigor, but never sought a quarrel; in short, was generally known as a “jam-up good man.”

This son of nature "fell for" the pretty face and quiet ways of Dolly Mizquet, the daughter of a farmer whom McLeod had induced to migrate from Illinois to the cattle country. This family of three boys, three girls, the father and mother, had brought quite a vogue of culture into the country. Dolly played the organ, and all of the rest sang in the choir. They all belonged to the church in Illinois, and it was natural for Elijah to expect that the entire family would join the church at Fairbrook, when it would come time to organize.

Although Robert McLeod was born and reared west of the Missouri, he found that he liked the Mizquets. It was his first experience in church-going, but he took kindly to it. His father, from old Scotch Presbyterian stock, had always read his Bible for the polemical points he could find in it, although his everyday life had been sadly deficient in Christian graces and virtues. He often said: "I know better than I do."

These Mizquets were different, only in respect of the time they had been in the West. Professing Christians, when they have no vital Christian experience, who are going along in a Christian community, living tolerably good lives, succumb easily, and fall away readily, when they remove to new scenes where restraints are not so strong. Elijah felt that he had come in

time to keep the Mizquets in line with the best in the Christian life. He announced a protracted meeting at Fairbrook on his third round, which fell about the first of December.

On the Sunday afternoon of this round, Elijah was annoyed by a game of baseball on the prairie, in plain view from the open windows. It was a lovely day for December in Dakota, and the youngsters couldn't afford to see it go to waste by sitting in a stuffy old schoolhouse. The Mizquets with McLeod, some elderly people who were afraid of catching cold, and some children who were made to attend, constituted the audience that Sunday afternoon.

This was the third time that McLeod had heard Green, and he was a deeply interested listener. That afternoon, he made the round of the stores and drummed up a crowd for the evening service. The next day, he and three other cowboys went over the country, urging the people to attend the meetings, and the crowds steadily increased until Wednesday night, when the house was packed.

Elijah's round of themes in a revival was Sin, Penitence, New Birth, Pardon; and he preached this round over and over. A change of subject and text on each recurrence of the theme gave the variety which prevented his audience from notic-

ing that there was any particular method in his program. On Sunday afternoon, he had preached on Sin in a graphic way, from the subject, "The Vandal of the Soul." He had returned to Sin on Wednesday night and treated it as the deadly, repulsive, damning thing that it is. He closed with the words:

"Sin debauches and disfigures the body; pollutes and defiles the imagination; blunts and brutalizes the sensibilities; binds and enslaves the will; beclouds the intellect. Sin cripples the individual; disrupts the community; undermines society; overthrows the state. Sin is the hideous serpent whose slimy path winds in and out through history, making it a stench to God and man. Sin stultifies art; drags literature into the bogs of putridity; misdirects science onto the mountains of sophistry and falsehood; creeps into the sanctuary itself and drives out the very elect into the desert of error and schism. I call on you to-night to break with sin. I ask you here and now to begin earnestly to extirpate it from your own body and soul, as the personal duty you owe yourself. I ask you to drive it out of your community and make a godly citizenry of the robust inhabitants of these plains; I ask you to look to the future and plan for a clear-eyed, straight-limbed, clean-lived race of descendants who will

fear God, tell the truth, and make money. This ought to be the wish of every thoughtful man. Let every one who wants to see this country a decent, law-abiding, respectable place to live in, and to raise children in, rise to his feet." Everybody got up. Possibly right there was where Elijah made the wrong move. But such a spontaneous, unanimous movement has a bewildering effect on the oldest campaigners. He continued:

"Now, while you are on your feet, let every one who will go into an organization whose object is to root out sin and work righteousness come forward and take seats in front." Without a moment's hesitation, McLeod stepped to the front and sat down. Elijah shook hands with him in a transport of exaltation and called for more, but no more came. McLeod turned and beckoned to the Mizquets, but they averted their looks from him. After a moment, Elijah felt that he had shot his bolt for that time and, in a spasm of perplexity, pronounced the benediction.

In a moment, McLeod was back among the Mizquets. The crowd around Elijah prevented him from getting to them immediately. He saw, in a moment, that there was excitement among them and shortly made his way to McLeod's side. The rancher turned on the minister, and asked:

“Was that an invitation to join the church that you made, when I went up front?”

“It would most certainly lead to joining the church. What other organization do you know of whose object is to root out sin and to work righteousness?”

“Well, that is what I understood you to mean, and that is what these good people understood. But it seems that they are not ready to join the church at this time. Mr. and Mrs. Mizquet say that the financial burden of a church will be too heavy for the few who will join.”

This blunt statement in public of what Mrs. Mizquet had intended only for the private ear of McLeod annoyed her. She stammered:

“Brother Green, you are aware that if we form a church organization at this place, we will pledge ourselves to support the church and its institutions. We don't feel able to do anything much along such lines. We have rather been in hopes that you would defer the organization of a church until next year. Meantime, we would leave our membership in Illinois. The Home Missionary Society can take care of this point for at least another year.” McLeod broke in:

“What would Fairbrook's share in your support be, Parson?”

“That would be fixed at the First Quarterly Conference. Possibly a hundred dollars.”

“And does that scare you, Mrs. Mizquet?”

“I think that would be more than a class at this point would raise, this year.”

McLeod's glance fell upon Dolly. He spoke very gently:

“And how do you feel about it, Miss Dolly?”

“Nothing, only that Mamma knows best.”

“And is that your sentiment, Mr. Mizquet?”

“Yes, I really think it will be best to put off the organization a year.”

“And is that what all of you good people think?” asked the ranchman, taking in the rest of the family with his glance. They all bowed in assent.

“Well, I won't ask any of these folks that don't know anything more about religion and churches than I do. I have been thinking very strongly of a church at Fairbrook ever since last Sunday afternoon. This dirty little hundred dollars—thunder! A steer would pay the most of it. I would give a dozen steers to see a church here in good running order. With these eight Mizquet folks to sorter toll us along on the right trail, I thought we had the identical layout for a dandy snap along religious lines. But the Mizquets have laid down on the job, so I guess that ends it. Miss Dolly, will you please return me the ring which I gave you, and which is on the

third finger of your left hand?" She raised a startled look to his face and exclaimed:

"You can't mean that, Robert!"

"Yes, I mean that. I am not looking for a wife in a family with not enough pep to stand up for a little thing like organizing a church." She took the ring from her finger and, with angry tears, handed it to him. He dropped it in his vest pocket and strode from the room. In a moment, his horse's hoofs were heard galloping up the road.

Elijah was so nonplussed by the way the affair had terminated, that he could only say:

"Well, it is time to go home."

The next morning, Elijah rode out to the W. D. ranch and found McLeod. The big ranchman would not have much to say. Evidently, he was badly hurt. These words escaped him:

"Miss Dolly settled my hash, Parson. With her loyal to the church, we could have made it, even if the rest of them had gone back on the proposition."

"It seems a pity that they did not know that you would do so much for the church before the matter came to a head as it did."

"Yes, I can see that it would have made a big difference."

“Knowing that, I believe that you ought to start all over again.”

“Now, Parson, how can you change the nature of such people? The contemptible little pile of money involved is what scared them. If they start into it leaning on others, where will they be if for any reason others should fail them?”

“Maybe they would get a larger vision of their privileges and responsibilities and go on, if they were thrown on their own resources.”

“Maybe so. But their actions last night made me doubt their profession. It has knocked my pins from under me, and I shall leave the whole thing alone.”

Elijah stayed with McLeod all day, but accomplished nothing. As he was leaving to go back to Fairbrook for the evening service, the rancher said:

“Parson, I sure appreciate all that you have done for me. Here is a little package I want you not to open until Christmas morning. I shall always be glad to see you at the ranch.” Then very wistfully: “Maybe you will remember now and then to speak of me when you are praying.”

On Christmas morning, Elijah opened the envelope and found a hundred dollar greenback in it. But McLeod never again went to church.

The meeting on that Thursday night was thinly attended and was discontinued on Friday evening. The Mizquets took an aversion to Elijah and gave him much trouble. Luke Grossett, the oracle of Fairbrook, said:

“Now it wouldn’t a hurt *me* so much fer folks to funk like the Mizquets done, but thet there Bob McLeod always was sech a queer feller. He acted jest like somebody had been a cheatin’ at kyards.”

It was several years before a church was organized at Fairbrook, and not a McLeod nor a Mizquet joined it.

Elijah had had an experience something like this one with McLeod while he had been on the Mockville Circuit.

He got very familiar with a young fellow by the name of Loup. This young man would frequently follow the preacher to his afternoon and evening appointments. Riding horseback from place to place, they had many long intimate talks. Andy was well educated, had taught school, and had recently been elected justice of the peace in Mockville, and was considered one of the rising young men of the county. The more abstruse problems of theology were the topics that he preferred to talk on. He dodged

practical Christianity, especially experimental religion. One day, after a vain attempt to get an experimental note from Andy, Elijah bluntly asked:

“Mr. Loup, why don’t you join the church?”

“I dislike very much to tell you.”

“You seem to be a believer in Christianity; your morals are blameless; you must know that you could be a power for righteousness if you were affiliated with the people of God; your position outside of the church is anomolous and more or less a stone of stumbling for weaker men than you are; there are many urgent reasons why you should throw in your lot with us.”

“Singular to relate, I have used every one of those arguments to myself, but every reason for joining the church is overborne by just one reason for remaining out.”

“What can that reason be?”

“It is a stubborn disbelief in the reality of Christian experience.”

“How did you ever arrive at such a state?”

“First, by my own personal failure in the pursuit of a vital Christian experience; and, secondly, by an unworthy display of pride in a professor of religion.”

“You interest me very much; do tell me the whole story.”

Thus solicited, Andrew Loup fell silent for some moments. Evidently he was carefully weighing his words.

“I would like for you to know that I fully appreciate my own individual responsibility to God. I am not trying to evade that responsibility when I tell you of the share another has in my condition. Still, I insist that that other one decided the matter, as it now stands, while the issue was still in doubt.”

“I guess you are thinking now of my uncompromising attitude at all times on the subject of personal responsibility.”

“I feel that I was pretty well grounded in that doctrine before I met you; so much so, that it seems ungenerous to bring any one else into the case. If I die unsaved, the Judge will doubtless make up His decision solely upon my own culpability.” Here he fell silent again, until Elijah exclaimed:

“Come, Andy; I’m listening.”

“Well, to make a long story short, I am a very good theoretical Christian. The system appeals strongly to my reason and my order of intelligence. I love to hear Christian doctrine discussed.”

“I certainly believe you on that statement. Otherwise, you would not follow me up to hear

the same subject discussed three times as you are doing to-day.”

“Yes; I think that I could make a pretty good sermon on ‘The Dual Nature of Jesus Christ’ myself?”

“I have no doubt that you could excel mine. But get on with your story.”

“Now, while my intellectual assent to Christianity was so hearty, my spiritual experience was utterly neutral. I wished very much to get a satisfying, personal, Holy Ghost realization of oneness with God. Mr. Green, are you acquainted with Betty March?”

“I have been at her father’s house several times.”

“What is your opinion of her?”

“I heard her relate her experience at Brown’s Camp Ground, and I thought it was a powerful and evangelical testimony.”

“Well, I was quite intimate with Betty for several months. She is a very attractive girl, as you know, but I trust that you will understand me when I say that I kept her company solely for the spiritual benefit that I might derive from association with her. Like yourself, I had absolute confidence in her religion. I asked for nothing better than an experience that would parallel hers.

“About three years ago, Betty and I attended

an all-day meeting at Brown's Camp Ground. A large crowd was present, and there was a big love-feast. It was the Sunday morning of the Quarterly Meeting, and people from the entire circuit were there, rejoicing in their acceptance with God. Betty got very happy. And I was as near the Kingdom as I had ever been before, as I watched the blessed expression on her face as she walked the aisles, shouting, praising God, clapping her hands, encouraging believers and exhorting sinners. But I did not get the evidence of acceptance with God.

"In the evening I drove her home. I remember that I was collecting my thoughts to ask her some superlative question about the Christian life, when she said:

" 'Andy, how did I look to-day, when I was shouting around the camp ground?'"

Elijah was shocked beyond expression. He was looking full at his companion, who was looking straight back at him across the space between their horses. After a moment of painful silence, Loup said:

"I see that her question affects you just as it affected me. I hope that I may never again encounter such a terrific anti-climax. I hope that I misjudged her, but all that I could think of was the hateful reflection that she was an arrant hypocrite. Since then, I have tried to look at it

in the light of spiritual pride. But whatever it may have been, I would give a thousand dollars if she had not spoken the words.”

“What was your reply to her?”

“I could make no reply. After a moment of embarrassment, I stopped the horse, and pretended to fix something about the harness, while I changed the subject. I got her home, somehow, and have never seen her since. She lives on the other end of the circuit, and it is not necessary for us to meet.”

“And you can’t get around that silly question of hers?”

“No. To properly understand me, you must try to realize the confidence I had in her. When I was looking at her, I was thinking of the rapture of her soul—pure, spiritual, above the earth-clouds. I was devoutly wishing that my soul, like hers, might soar away, like hers, into the empyrean of pure ethereal joys, and bask, like hers, in supernal light. All of that time, she was wondering how she looked! I presume that a ballroom belle has the same thoughts. Oh, Mr. Green, it—it—it is just heart-sickening.”

VII: TREMBLING FOR JESUS

. . . A man may lose his sense of moral direction. He may not become a whit less respectable in the eyes of his neighbors than before, but he is lost, like a sheep in the wilderness. The wolves of temptation may not have devoured him, or the winds of hard circumstance overcome him—but he is in peril through not knowing the way.

BISHOP McCONNELL.

VII

Trembling for Jesus

The Epworth League in Greenford was trying out an Adventure in Evangelism. The Adventure consisted of a series of revival meetings in a schoolhouse five miles from town. The method was for a band wagon full of the Epworthians to go to the schoolhouse every night and hold a meeting.

While Elijah had suggested this program, he did not undertake to control it. Of course, he was ready with advice when needed. He was a plain member of the local chapter and took his place in the ranks, performing the duties required of him. He was expecting a strong reflex influence on the chapter.

There were forty members who could do this work. It was agreed at the outset that the pastor, president, and secretary should attend every meeting. This left nine members to be chosen from the body of the chapter each night, and as the secretary chose new members every night, the round of the chapter was made once in four days.

George Mulvaney was the most spiritual member in the chapter, but he was so excessively dif-

fidest that it had been impossible to get him into that part of the work down to Friday night of the second week, on which day he came into the detail for the third time.

As the Thursday night detail was returning home after a very encouraging meeting, Elijah and Brewer, the President, were sitting together in a corner of the wagon, quietly discussing the situation. Brewer said:

“I feel as though we have reached the crisis of the meetings. Much—very much depends upon our efforts to-morrow night. I would say that I am in favor of selecting only the best workers for to-morrow night. Miss Hanson says that George Mulvaney falls in the detail. It seems to me that we might excuse George to-morrow night.”

“That is your affair, Brother Brewer, but I would say, in a general way, that it will be bad policy. This is the wrong time to tamper with established methods. If some preacher were carrying on this meeting, and if he understood the psychology of revivals, he would not ask a bishop himself to preach to-morrow night, so important is the established order in critical periods of a meeting. But in a special way, it would seem to me particularly wise to have Mulvaney on the program for to-morrow night. Are you

aware of the great influence that George wields in that community?"

"I know that about two-thirds of the people attending the meetings are his tenants."

"Yes, and every tenant is under many obligations to George. He put down one-half of the money for that schoolhouse, the best rural school building in the county. Last year, when typhoid swept the neighborhood, he hired Dr. Gabbert at fifteen dollars a day to stay right with the epidemic. That ten days' intensive work of Gabbert's undoubtedly saved many lives, gave the people a dozen pointers in sanitation, and incidentally gave a young physician exactly the opportunity he needed in starting a practice. These, and many other acts of George Mulvaney's make him one of the powerful human agencies in this revival."

"Very well, Brother Green, I shall take your advice and let the detail stand as it is."

"See George to-morrow and suggest that he prepare something to say in the meeting."

"That's a capital suggestion, and I believe that I will pass it back to you for all that it is worth."

"Thank you; I had already determined on taking my own medicine."

The next morning Brother Green happened in

at Mulvaney's office. After a few common-places, he remarked casually:

"Had a mighty good meeting last night, George, out at Mulvaney's Schoolhouse."

"Yes, Brewer was in here a moment ago and told me about it. He tells me that I am on the detail to-night and seems especially anxious that I should speak. I have avoided speaking in public so far; it seems that more voluble folks than I am should do the talking."

"Now, Brother Mulvaney, allow me to remark that volubility is not the principal ingredient of talk. I am glad that Brother Brewer has spoken to you about it. To tell you the truth, George, I am building big hopes on your speech to-night."

"All right, 'Lijey, I shall do my best." Then Mulvaney fell silent, and the wise pastor took his departure, feeling that it was a fine time to leave the man alone.

That night, after the wagon, with the twelve Epworthians aboard, had started, the president laid off the work, appointed a leader, and assigned each person on the detail his task on the program. The speeches were to occupy, nominally, five minutes. Allowing for the usual number of shorter speeches, it was believed that this part of the program would consume between thirty and thirty-five minutes. George was the

eleventh one on the list, the president coming last. He said, with a sort of choke:

“I shall try to do whatever He would have me do.”

The house was packed. Every Epworthian seemed alive to the situation. The speeches came in quick succession and rapidly worked the thoroughly mellow congregation into a receptive state. Mulvaney's time came. The pastor, president, and leader all glanced encouragingly toward him. He seemed ready to run, and only by a mighty effort did he arise. His jaw worked convulsively twice, and then, brokenly, in a solemn stillness, he said:

“My friends, I would like to tell you how much Jesus has done for me, but somehow my mouth won't go off. But if I can't say anything for Jesus, I can at least stand here and tremble for him.”

He was actually trembling, so his words were not at all theatrical. Their effect was electrical. A mighty tremor passed through the audience. Strong men sobbed; women cried aloud; Brewer afterwards said that the appearance of things resembled nothing more than a coming storm. Mulvaney seemed to have prepared a speech, of which, apparently, he could not remember a word. He stood quite still for a moment trem-

bling in every fiber, while the excitement constantly increased.

When he sat down, the Holy Ghost filled all the house as with a mighty, rushing wind. More than a score were eagerly asking:

“What shall I do to be saved?”

The president’s speech came next, but he tactfully turned it into an inquiry meeting, and the Greenford Chapter had all it could do for the next two hours, passing from one to another, pointing them to Christ. At this work, George Mulvaney made a full hand. Before the meeting closed, he rejoiced many times that he had stood up and trembled for Jesus.

Elijah said that among the many incidental, reflex effects of that Adventure in Evangelism was the unstopping of George Mulvaney’s mouth. He was never again at a loss what to say at a League meeting.

WAITING AND WATCHING

In another meeting Elijah had been kind to a little motherless girl of ten who constantly attended alone. One evening he asked her why her father did not attend. She burst into tears and said:

“Brother Green, please pray for my father.”

As that was all she could say, Elijah took the

matter quite seriously and prayed frequently the next day for "the father of the little girl who is so distressed about him." That night, when the child came and took her accustomed seat about the middle of the auditorium, a man accompanied her.

Elijah could sing a little, and that night he sang the solo, "Waiting and Watching." He could see that the father was greatly affected, and intended to speak to him at the close of the service, but was hindered by the crowd that pressed up to the chancel when the benediction was pronounced. When he found himself at liberty, the man was gone and the child with him. He could only pray that some seed might have fallen in good ground.

The next evening, the couple were in their places. Personal testimonies were always a part of the meetings, and a half hour was occupied on that evening with an experience meeting. The third one to arise was the father of this motherless child. He said:

"Most of you know me for a non-attendant at church services for the past two years. Since my wife died, I have had to follow my trade of shoemaking and keep house at the same time. But of course every one has time for divine service—if he only thinks so. My real reason for staying away was that I felt hard and bitter

against God for taking away my wife. Little Minnie, here, has been attending these revival services all the time and has been after me every night to come with her. But I always packed her off alone and stayed in my shop, working and brooding over the loss of my wife and my little daughter Lucy.

“All day yesterday, Minnie was begging me on every occasion to go to the meeting at night. And there was some influence besides Minnie at work, for I felt drawn this way. My thoughts had become very rebellious in the two years since my wife left me, and I had grown hard and wicked. But toward evening, yesterday, I promised Minnie that I would come, and I was here last night. But my heart was steeled against divine influences.

“Everything went in at one ear and out at the other, until the preacher sang, ‘Waiting and Watching,’ just after the experience and prayer meeting. It was the first time I ever heard it, and the first two verses passed by without touching my hard heart. Then he sang:

“‘There are little ones glancing about in my path,
In want of a friend and a guide.’

“Ah! That struck me like a blow in the face. Here is my little Minnie, needing my daily Christian walk; my hand to guide her away from the

traps and pitfalls of life; and I was moping away my time, complaining against God, who doeth all things well, for taking from me my wife, to be an angel in heaven, when all the time, I had this sweet child left me, to cheer and comfort me, and for me to guide aright. But the preacher sang further:

“ ‘There are dear little eyes looking up into mine,
Whose tears might be easily dried.’

“I had so easily dried Minnie’s tears, yesterday, by merely promising to come to meeting. Why shouldn’t I go right on, comforting her and drying her tears? I began to make promises to ease the heart stabs of that song, but the singer kept right on:

“ ‘But Jesus may beckon the children away
In the midst of their grief and their glee.’

“That broke my heart. I cried, but my tears were not altogether bitter, as so many of my tears have lately been. They were penitent tears. I had sinned against my God so grievously. I prayed back here in my seat for forgiveness, but the distracting sights and sounds in the church prevented me from centering my thoughts, so I was not relieved. Then I went home, and there, in my own room, kneeling beside my bed, peace

came. So I have been happy all day and am here to-night, with my own tears and my little Minnie's tears dried. I am happy in the thought that there will be those I love at the beautiful gate, waiting and watching for me."

This man was one of the very few whom Elijah overlooked in his pastoral visits. But he had been only a short time in Frankton when this occurred. The unobtrusive, retiring ways of the shoemaker had been accentuated by his great loss, and, brooding over his widowed condition alone, had nearly cost him his birthright. Little Minnie's despairing cry, "Pray for my father," started the chain of Christian influence which enveloped and saved her father for God. It is obvious that Elijah's prayers acted in the divine ether of the meeting, so as to draw Minnie's father to the church.

DISOBEYING HIS MOTHER IN THE LORD

At Frankton, Elijah had another singular experience with a child.

Mrs. Walker, the Recording Steward, came to him and made the strange request that he would not talk to her boy on religious matters. He replied:

"Of course I shall respect your parental rights in this thing, Sister Walker, but I am at a loss

to understand why you should make such a request."

"Well, David is a very good boy and has strong religious inclinations. He now has his education on his hands, and if he gets an undue bias toward study on religious subjects, he will not make the progress in literary lines which it is important for him to make at this period of his life."

"In what grade is he now studying?"

"He is working in the Sixth at school, but is preparing the Seventh at home."

"And how old is he?"

"He is just past twelve."

"Then he must have doubled one year before this."

"He entered school in the Second Grade at the age of seven. You see, Brother Green, I am anxious that he should enter High School next September a year. Besides the two grades he will make this year, he is carrying piano and pastel work out of school hours."

"Well! If all of these studies are essential at his age, it *would* seem unwise to crowd religious training on him."

"Now, Brother Green, don't get sarcastic. David will have plenty of time, after he makes the High School, to study on religion."

"Well, Sister, as I said before, I recognize your

parental authority over David. I shall not talk to him on religious topics, only when he forces me to do so by asking me questions. We are often together. His conversation is constantly reverting to theological and religious themes, so you have set me a difficult task."

That very afternoon, young Walker called at the parsonage on his way from school and strolled at once into the library. It was in January of 1915, when the war was raging on so many fronts. He seemed perfectly informed on the war news, and, after talking it for a while, he remarked, quite casually:

"Mr. Green, in your sermon last night, you spoke of the time you were born again. I wish that you would explain just what you mean by that."

Elijah turned to the third chapter of John and read it very carefully, commenting as he went. The boy seemed to be listening only casually, but his mind received instruction with such ease that it was not necessary for him to pay the strict attention which some people must give, in order to understand a subject. At the close of the chapter, he remarked:

"It is very clear, isn't it?"

"I am glad to hear you say so, David. A great many people make a difficulty of it."

"Yes, Nicodemus seemed to have trouble with

it. But it is not hard for me to see that there may be a soul birth as well as a body birth. There are many different kinds of body birth, even. The birth of a mammal is different from that of a fowl or a reptile. Then see the dragon fly, the butterfly, the mosquito. A plant has a birth, too. We can see them born in the culture jars in the school windows. The soul birth is only a little more hard to understand, so, just as you say, we have to take God's Word for it. Mr. Green, do you think that I am too young to be born again?" Now wasn't that a tight corner he had crowded poor Elijah into? He could only answer:

"Certainly not, David; I have frequently seen younger people than you converted."

"Well, then, it seems that I ought to attend to the matter and get it off my mind."

"It does look like that would be the part of wisdom, David. But do you think, in view of the large number of studies you are now pursuing, that it will be wise to bother yourself with religion?"

"Why, that is precisely the way that Mamma talks! But it looks to me that if it were off my mind, and I were perfectly satisfied about it, I would then be able to go on with my other studies to better advantage."

"Well, now, to tell you the exact fact, David,

your mother does not want you to be troubling yourself with these matters. You know that Paul says, 'Children, obey your parents.' "

"Yes, Mamma quoted that to me the other day. I found the passage with the Concordance, the way you taught me. Neither you nor Mamma quoted all of the passage. It reads, 'Children, obey your parents *in the Lord.*' I believe that that Scripture means that we must obey our parents so long as it is not contrary to the will of God; but it is the will of God that I should be saved. I ought to obey God rather than man."

That was one of the times that Elijah had nothing to say, and he said it. David continued:

"I guess you and Mamma aren't trying to defeat me in this thing?"

"God bless you, child, a thousand times, no."

"All right." Then he lowered his voice. "I shall ask God to convert me to-night, when I kneel for my evening prayer at nine o'clock. I wish you would be at prayer at the same time. God might refuse me, but he can't refuse you. I believe you are not in the habit of being refused."

That choked Elijah all up. He made the promise, and for some time before nine o'clock he was on his knees in the library. The Enfold-ing, Filling Presence was with him in great sweetness. He felt as sure that David Walker was passing into the Kingdom as he felt that he was

on his knees. He went into the library next morning, when the first school bell rang, and soon David came along. He dodged in and whispered:

“It was just like we expected it would be. Thank you for helping me.” Then he was gone. The naïveté of it was like sweet music and fragrant incense all day to Elijah. That afternoon, David came by on his way home and said:

“Oh, Brother Green, I had good lessons to-day.”

“Why, David, I understand that you always have good lessons.” He blushed and responded: “Others may say that, but I know that I am fresher some days than others. And to-day I was fresher than ever. I could study so easily. Say,” lowering his voice, “will you please go into the church with me for a while?” The minister wonderingly followed the child into the church. They sat on the back seat.

“Brother Green, you must pray for me so that I shall go aright in what I am going to say. I am in a hurry to get home, so you won’t have much time.” They knelt and Elijah very feelingly asked the Holy Spirit to direct David’s words. Then the boy said:

“Brother Green, I must join the church, next Sunday.”

“David, will your mother approve?”

“We must convince her that it is the thing to do.”

“Very well; you mention it to her to-night; I shall call on her and talk it over to-morrow.”

But when Elijah called, Mrs. Walker immediately broached the subject, by saying:

“Oh, Brother Green, I know what you have come for. David told me that you would be here to talk about his joining the church next Sunday, but you will not have to argue the point. He swept away all of my objections. Oh, you can't fancy how I feel so small and so magnified, both at once. I feel so little when I think of my fussy interference with the will of God, and so great, when I consider how He has honored me by giving me such a son.”

“Sister Walker, I want to tell you, to begin with, that I did not go contrary to your wishes in the matter. David pushed the question on me every time.”

“Yes, he explained that to me. But it has come out all right. How singularly blind and stupid I was. But God has forgiven me. I see that he has first of all given me my child to train for Him. Hereafter, all other training can afford to wait.”

“And it will be all right for David to join the church next Sunday?”

“Indeed, yes. I am now only too anxious for him to be in the church. And next Sunday of all others, because it is Communion, and I shall commune with him.”

VIII: THE FUNERAL OF A FIDDLE

A gospel for men, wicked, weary, heavily laden with their cares of mind, body, heart, memory—men with divine instincts, however untended; men I have found that the appeal to life, the appeal to the mightier impulses—conscience, character, God, eternity, retribution, love, Christ—touched one as another.

BISHOP QUAYLE.

VIII

The Funeral of a Fiddle

After the fiasco at Fairbrook, Elijah went to Otter Creek, about fifty miles from Fairbrook, and entirely out of its range. Here he put on a series of revival meetings, like many others in a new country, with no one to help him who had ever professed religion.

His direct appeal arrested attention, and on Wednesday night the animals began uneasily to stir. This was again the fifth sermon, and the general theme was Sin. Two young men by the name of Baker would go out of doors, then return and noisily seat themselves on the front seats, chew tobacco, and spit vigorously under the teacher's desk, which Elijah was using as a pulpit. After they had returned the third time, the minister paused and, looking them squarely in the face, said:

“I have always been afraid to reprove persons in my audience who misbehave themselves, because I might make the mistake an old minister once made. In one of his audiences, a young man was misbehaving considerably, and the min-

ister turned to and gave him a good going-over, when the father of the boy arose and said:

“ ‘Parson, that boy is an idiot; it doesn’t do no good to scold him. I’ll jest take him home.’

“Ever since I heard that story, I have been careful about reprimanding for misbehavior. I wouldn’t like to tear in and scold an idiot.”

At this, the Bakers arose and again left the house very noisily, and on the outside they talked loudly and profanely until the service closed, when they returned. Elijah went up to Frank Baker and, laying his hand on his arm, said:

“My friend, are you aware that you have made yourself liable to the grand jury?”

“You take your hand off of me, or I’ll mash your mouth all over your face.”

Just then two husky fellows, Jim Rowe and Joe Vincent, came up, one on each side of Elijah. Jim said:

“Stand your ground, Parson; we will see that you have fair play. Now Frank, you draw in your horns. The decent people of this country won’t stand for your nonsense.”

The father of the boys here interposed:

“Nor I won’t stand for it neither. Frank, you and Bill have to behave yourselves.”

The young fellows sullenly left the house. After about a half-hour’s social chat, the crowd

broke up. Elijah went to old man Baker and said:

“Brother Baker, I want to go home with you. You have invited me several times, but I always had some other engagement ahead of you.”

“Sure, Parson; always welcome. But I supposed you would be put out by my boys, so I didn’t ask you this evenin’. Jest git on your hoss an’ follow my sleigh.”

It was bright moonlight, and the sleighing was good, so that Elijah had to spur a little to keep up. When they reached the gate to Baker’s pasture, the two boys got down to open it. After Elijah had ridden through, he dismounted. Baker whipped up and left them together, as home was not far off, and the boys could walk the rest of the way. The minister said:

“Boys, I believe that this would be a good place to settle our differences.” Bill replied:

“You mean to say you want to fight us both?”

“I don’t want to fight either one of you. I want to talk our difficulty over and come to an understanding to get along together.”

“We don’t like to be called idiots.”

“I didn’t call you idiots; try to remember what I said.”

“Say, Parson, you knowed we wasn’t idiots.”

“I couldn’t know it from the way you acted.”

“Did we act like idiots?”

“You certainly didn’t act like sensible men. It seems to me that any one with common sense would not disturb a public meeting.”

“What did our actions have to do with our sense?”

“Well, you were laying yourselves liable to prosecution. The laws are against you, and it seems to me that no sensible man will go contrary to law, in the presence of so many witnesses.”

“Do you intend to prosecute us?”

“Not if I can help it. That is what I stopped back here for. I like to get along with everybody that comes to my meetings. But I have my rights before the law, and if soft, easy measures fail, believe me, I shall not hesitate to use harsh ones.”

“Well now, Parson, what do you want out of us to-night?”

“I just want an assurance that you will not disturb my meetings any more.”

“Oh, we can stay away from your old meetings.”

“If it is impossible for you to behave yourselves at meeting, it will be a good thing for you to stay at home. Come now, you know that you can behave yourselves at meeting as well as anybody. I don’t want to do you any harm. Come

along; behave yourselves; get your share of good out of the meeting.”

“Much good we are going to get out of it. You are breaking up all of the fun we have been having.”

“What fun have I broken up?”

“There was going to be a dance at Tom Armstrong’s house to-night, but it was called in on account of the meeting. And Tom and his wife and his sister-in-law are all beginning to talk serious. And Tom, the only fiddler in the country, and his wife and her sister two of the best dancers.”

“Now, Bill, if those folks can see the harm in the dance, it surely is no good. I understand that there is always whisky at the dances, here in this country.”

“’Course we have to have a little sumpin to drink.”

“And I understand that a dance frequently winds up with a fight.”

“Oh, yes, somebody always gits a little gay, and he has to be took down.”

“Now, boys, I want to ask you, are such things doing your country any good?”

“Maybe not.”

“Have you ever been present at a dance when there was trouble?”

“Chris Wolfe was shot at one about a year

ago. Clem Wilson was stabbed at one last spring."

"If such things happen at dances, it seems to me that I am doing a good thing in breaking them up." Bill had been carrying on the conversation, but Frank now spoke:

"Fur as I'm concerned, I can behave myself, and I am willing to promise."

"Oh, yes, I can promise too," said Bill.

"All right, boys, let's shake hands on it."

"All the same, that idiot business sticks in my craw," said Bill, lugubriously.

"Well, since you fellows have come across like gentlemen, I want to apologize for saying that. I ought not to have said it, and I am sorry for it. If you will pardon me for it, I shall be more careful in the future." Here both of those big fellows broke down and blubbered. Elijah was walking and leading his horse. He held out his hand:

"Is it a go, boys? Do you forgive me?"

They paused in the moonlight, and each seized a hand. Elijah continued:

"I believe that it will be a good thing for me to apologize in public to-morrow night, for the rot about the idiot; what do you say?" Frank replied:

"Not till after we apologize for our meanness."

"Good enough! We have all been in the

wrong; you make your apology, and then I will make mine.”

“’Nough said.”

They had now arrived at the stable. Mr. Baker had put up his horses, and he and the rest of the family had gone into the house. He was surprised when the three entered the house on the friendliest of terms. The basis of their “make-it-up” was not mentioned. A pleasant evening was spent. After prayers, Mr. Baker remarked:

“This is better than for you young folks to be off to a dance to-night, with me a worryin’ if you would all get home sound and well.”

The next evening, when the time came for Elijah to preach, he said:

“Frank and William Baker wish to make a statement, and I shall now give them the opportunity.”

Frank first spoke:

“I am very sorry for the way I acted here at the meetin’ last night.” It was now Bill’s turn:

“So am I sorry. The Parson says that he is going to apologize for what he said about idiots. But the more I think about it, the less I want him to apologize. He really didn’t call us idiots, but we were idiots all the same. So I don’t want him to beg pardon at all. Fact is, me an’ Frank got jest what was a comin’ to us. Parson Green is a mighty straight, nice man. An’ I put you all

wise to this: Don't try no shenanigan with him, for me an' Frank an' Jim Rowe an' Joe Vincent won't stand for it."

These speeches produced a most favorable impression. But, Elijah made his apology. Then he preached with great power and liberty on Repentance. At the close of the sermon, he asked for penitents to come to the altar. Frank and Bill Baker knelt, and many others with them. The minister gave a general exhortation for all of them to confess their sins and ask for pardon.

"I can't get around to all of you before some of you will be converted. After you feel that God has pardoned you, it will be all right for you to rise and sit on the altar, if you so desire."

Instantly there was a murmur of prayer going up. Elijah started in at one end of the bench to direct the minds of the seekers. He heard a commotion at the other end, and looking up saw Frank Baker sitting on the bench and leaning over Bill. Then he went on talking to the seeker with whom he was kneeling. Soon this man was happy. Just then Bill Baker was powerfully saved. Elijah went to their end of the bench, and sat down between them. He put an arm over the shoulders of each. To Frank he whispered:

"Frank, do you love Jesus?"

“You bet I do,” was the naïve reply. Then catching himself, he continued: “I guess you don’t bet, Parson Green—I mean Brother Green. I said ‘you bet’ before I thought. I jest meant to put it as strong as I know how, that I love Jesus.”

“That’s all right, Frank; I understood you; and consider that you expressed yourself good and strong.” Then turning to Bill, he asked:

“Bill, old man, how are you feeling?”

“Jest bully!” Bill exploded. “Oh, that isn’t what I wanted to say, Parson—Brother Green, I mean; I wanted to say, I feel so nice and light.”

“Well, Bill, you and Frank and I must tie in and help these other folks out of the place they are in. Cinch up, take a snug turn around the pommel with your lariat, and then throw the rope to the fellow that needs it.”

In a moment, each of the three was kneeling by a seeker. Many were the professions. There is no human instrumentality quite so compelling as the words of a newborn soul.

Elijah went home that night with Tom Armstrong, the fiddler. Tom lived some distance from the schoolhouse, up in the foothills of the Black Hills—Mountains would have been a more appropriate word.

Tom’s wife and her sister, Ella Ellis, had pro-

fessed religion at the altar that night. Elijah was anxious to bring Tom into the fold also, because he felt that one in a family still holding to the carousing habits of the old days would sooner or later break up the spiritual life of the others. But Elijah was not prepared for the thing which happened that night in the Armstrong home.

When they were all safe and snug inside the house, they grew quiet, after a few moments of conversation. Then Tom exclaimed:

“Let’s sing something.”

Elijah was carrying “Songs of Conquest” in his saddlebags to the schoolhouse. Armstrong had bought three copies at the first, and it seemed that they had been practicing the pieces in the book to the violin accompaniment, and they knew several of them well. “Beautiful Isle of Somewhere” was the first piece; this was followed by the “Glory Song” and “Saved by Grace.” These three selections about the blessed future state caused Elijah to remark:

“You folks like to sing about heaven.”

“Fact is, Parson, my father is a Universalist, and I drift to what he would like. He is a good man, and I would like to believe that his doctrine about there being no hell is correct. But he gets his ideas of heaven from the Bible, and the same Book teaches the doctrine of hell.”

“Did you learn to play the fiddle from your father?”

“No, indeed. He dislikes the fiddle and the dance.”

“How did you get into the way of playing the fiddle?”

“Well, you see, I had a sort of a knack for it. There’s something in me that naturally speaks back to a violin.”

“I see; and you and your fiddle have been great friends?”

“Yes. There are only a few things I love more. I don’t know if there is anything, except my wife, that I love more.”

“Oh, yes, of course, you love your soul more.”

“Yes, yes. Of course.”

“What did you think of the proposition to go to the altar to-night?”

“I wanted to go very much when I saw Mollie and Ella going; but my training was strong on me, and it influenced me against going.”

“Well, there were two influences at work in your soul—one to go to the altar, the other against going. Which do you conscientiously believe made for the right?”

“To tell the truth, I ought to have gone to the altar.”

“In spite of the Universalist faith that you are all right as you are?”

“As I said before, hell is in the Bible, as well as heaven.”

“Yes; and sin and righteousness are in the Bible.”

“I believe I told you once that my father is a mighty good man.”

“And I heartily believe you. Now, why do you suppose that he is a Universalist?”

“I have often thought it is on account of us children.” Here, the very thing that Elijah had found true of several Universalists was about to turn up with respect to Armstrong, Sr.

“How would you children have anything to do with the matter?”

“Well, of course my father loves his children; all of them are already damned, if sin and its punishment are to be taken the way the Bible puts it; his partiality for us has made him grasp at any straw for relief in his mind that we are lost. I may be mistaken, but that is the way I have figured it.”

“How many children has your father?”

“Two other sons and myself. I suppose that you may say that I am the best one of the bunch. My two brothers drink and gamble, curse and swear. I have no such inclinations, but I fiddle

for all of the dances in the country. And, four times out of five, it is at the dance that arrangements are made to gamble. Four fights out of five take place at the dance. Our country is new, and temptations to go astray don't catch our young girls like I hear they are caught at the dances in older countries."

"How do you explain that?"

"I don't hardly know if I can explain it. But you see, the men are in a big majority here, and every girl has plenty of chances to marry. So most of them marry before much temptation comes their way."

"Well, now, Tom, what are you going to do about getting religion?"

"Why, I think it will all wind up by my professing. I am awful glad to have you here tonight; it has helped me a whole lot. Now you read the Bible and pray for me."

After prayers, Tom drew the chords of Old Hundred, saying:

"Let's sing the doxology."

After the doxology, Tom very solemnly put his violin in its case. Elijah thought to himself how like a coffin it looked. Tom then stepped to the long box stove, swung back the top, which opened on a pivot, and, laying the instrument in its case, which looked so like a coffin, on the great bed of

hot coals, quickly shut the top. Elijah sprang up with an exclamation of disapproval and tried to get to the stove, but Armstrong held him back.

“Just a minute, Parson; what do you want to do?”

“I want to keep that splendid instrument from burning.” But even then, the roar of the flames within the stove showed that he was too late to save the fiddle. Tom’s face was in a spasm. The minister said:

“I was thinking, only a moment ago, of how you might dedicate your violin to the service of God. I knew a cornetist once who did great good with his instrument.”

“Yes, I had thoughts like that myself. But I was afraid of the temptation. That cornetist wasn’t Tom Armstrong. I’m starting in to get religion, and I don’t intend to flirt with the old things which I am leaving. I was reading to-day about plucking out your right eye. If my violin was not my right eye, it was most. Now it’s out of the way—one trail less to bumfuzzle me in getting onto the Jesus trail. I’m going to the altar to-morrow night. Now let’s go to bed.”

They were up very early, and about daylight Elijah Green rode off for a little tour of forty miles. In that trip, Elijah saw the father and two brothers of Tom Armstrong, and told them

of Tom's intention. He got their promises to be at that night's meeting. Each of them lived on his own ranch, some distance from the others, but the minister saw them all within the forty mile circuit and was on time at the meeting.

This was the seventh night of the series, and the New Birth was the general theme. All four of the Armstrong men were present. When the call came for seekers to kneel at the altar, Tom came forward and knelt. Immediately his father was by his side, with his arm around him and, with his mouth close to his ear, said:

"Oh, Tommy, my boy, call mightily on God for salvation."

"Salvation from what, father?"

"From anything you think you are in danger of."

"I feel in danger of the wrath to come; but you have always contended that there is no hell."

"Oh, my son, maybe there is a hell. Pray for deliverance from it, anyhow."

"All right, father; you pray with me."

Then the father heart explored the divine promises for the son; he climbed all the heights of the Kingdom; he pleaded the Atonement with melting fervor; and all the time that son was saying over and over:

“God, save me from hell.”

At last the father quit praying and listened for a moment to what Tom was saying:

“God, save me from hell. God, save me from hell.”

“O God, hear that prayer,” exclaimed the father. At these words, the younger man found peace and dropped his head on his father’s shoulder, crying:

“He saves me from hell; He saves me from hell. O mighty Saviour; O mighty Saviour.”

IX: UP FROM THE SLAVERY OF
LUST

It is marvelous what a transformation Godliness makes in a human being. It is mysterious how that which is spiritual can so impress and renovate that which is material, for it is certain that Godliness does reach, modify, and improve every faculty and power of the physical organism. The affections recoil from every debasing attraction; shake off the slime of worldly alliances; and turn to more worthy objects.

JAMES HENRY POTTS.

IX

Up from the Slavery of Lust

Augustine, before his conversion, resembled many whom we see every day. He moved in nice, decent society; followed the genteel occupation of teaching; possessed a keen intellect; was omnivorously studious; was of a naturally sweet disposition, binding men to himself as though with hooks of steel.

This brilliant rhetorician, the son of a devout widow, was a Manichean, which, as far as I can make out, was Fourth and Fifth Century language for Christian Scientist. Manicheism was a cult for making one feel easy on account of sin, at the same time that he was displaying unctuous piety. Long before his conversion, Augustine was sure of the intrinsic rottenness of the doctrines and life of his sect. Why did he continue to walk with the Manicheans? Because he was as rotten as his sect, and because Christianity condemned him, while Manicheism condemned him not. The answer reaches to the depths of the diseased state of man in his wanderings from God. It is an indelicate subject, but so important that it ought to be put into

print for modern Augustines. Thou Christ of pure thoughts, but unsparing words, guide me aright in what I here set down:

In brief, until he was thirty-three years old, Augustine was a common, out-and-out libertine. While yet in his teens, he formed an illicit connection with a woman who was the mother of his son, Adeodatus. His sin so obsessed him that he left his home in North Africa and slipped away from his mother to go to Italy, where he might give free rein to his lust. But his mother followed him, and together they lived in Milan, where he became intimate with Ambrose, and where Augustine daily sank deeper in spiritual despair, and "in the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life."

No man ever wanted salvation more than did Augustine, but lust held the greatest intellect of that age an unwilling captive, while he raved and tore at the fetters which bound him. The excruciating pangs of his soul make the most harrowing literature outside the penitential Psalms.

And then the climax came. He suddenly rose one day and left the company with whom he was talking because he didn't want to cry in their presence and, going into the garden, threw himself under a fig tree, where he rocked and shook in agony. A child in a neighboring house began to sing:

“Take up and read; take up and read.”

Wonderingly he returned to the house and, lifting a volume of Apostolic epistles from the table, opened it with a prayer and read:

“Not in rioting and drunkenness; not in chambering and wantonness; not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provisions for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” Right there “all the gloom of doubt vanished away.”

The Christ who had lived a continent life on earth as many years as Augustine had lived wickedly now entered and dominated the new man's life. Whereas, before, he had said of his mistresses, “How can I live without them?” he now found it entirely easy to live without them. His walk from that day was an example of rectitude and continence.

It is a far cry from a Fifth Century theologian to a Nineteenth Century Ohio River pilot, but that is the transition I must make.

One night in the Eighties of the last century, the officers and passengers were discussing religion around a table in the cabin of an Ohio River steamboat. The pilot off duty, a debonair, soft-spoken man, was leading the conversation. Elijah Green and the express messenger were interested observers and listeners only, until the

conversation changed to marriage. The messenger and the pilot lived in the port at the end of the voyage, and Elijah was serving a church ten miles from the city.

Now this pilot seemed to make no secret of his dissolute life. All through the religious discussion, he freely used the sophistry of Robert G. Ingersoll, who was prominently before the public in his lectures against revealed religion. Elijah was not surprised that, when the subject turned to marriage, which might easily have been treated merely from the social standpoint, the pilot was plainly impatient at the idea of its divine institution. The messenger, a genial, cultured little Irishman, here joined in the conversation:

“I have always said that if there is any institution on earth which may be considered of divine origin, it must be the family, which is established by marriage.”

“Tut, tut, Meginniss. Rousseau says that all such is a factitious sentiment, engendered by society, and cried up by the women with great care and address, in order to establish their empire and secure command to that sex which ought to obey.”

“I suppose, of course, that there is no possibility that Rousseau may have been mistaken,” replied Meginniss, dryly.

“Well, yes, he may have been mistaken; and

it is among the possibilities that you are mistaken."

"If I have read the truth about Rousseau, he was a devil of a fellow—and a bachelor. And it may be entirely fitting, Graham, that you, a bachelor and a devil of a fellow, should quote him."

"I have never heard that a single life is against the law."

"Tell us, Graham, honestly, why are you not married?"

"I presume it is all right for those who can afford it to marry, but I could never marry on my salary. I was just going to ask you, Meginness, for a loan of ten dollars until next payday. How could I get along as a married man on my pay, when, as a bachelor, I have to borrow money?"

Meginness took out his pocket book, and took from it a ten dollar bill. He held it toward Graham, and asked:

"What will you be doing with this money, Graham?" The pilot airily replied:

"Oh, we'll be in port for six hours, and I'll want to have a pleasant time."

"Possibly with some of the soiled doves on Division Street?"

"Why, Meginness, old boy, you are a mind reader." He had reached for the money and had

one end of the bill in his hand, but the express messenger was still holding firmly to the other end. There was scorn in the Irishman's next words:

"It comes with a splendid grace from you, a bachelor, to be borrowing money from me, a married man, when your intention is to use the money in breaking the Seventh Commandment."

"Don't get melodramatic, Meginness. Come, now, let go of the money. You'll get it back, with eight per cent a month, on payday." But Meginness held to the money. He smiled pleasantly at the rest of the company and continued:

"I would like for the rest of you to notice what a singular turn this matter has taken. My good friend Graham doesn't believe that the family is a sacred institution, while I do so believe. He backs his belief by remaining single and spending his money on harlots; I have backed my belief by marrying, and at present I have three children, all straight of limb and clear of eye, and yet, my good friend Graham draws \$150 a month, while I have the magnificent income of \$60 a month. As he said that he could not marry because his salary is too small, how does it happen that he cannot pull through to the next payday, in his state of single-blessedness, with a salary two-and-a-half times the size of mine? I'd be ashamed,

Graham, if I were you, to seek a loan of a married man.

“And then, I wish that you would consider, for a moment, how I shall feel, if I let you have this money. I am the priest of my family, and my wife is the priestess. We are solemnly consecrated to the task of rearing three little lambs whom God has given us, so that they may honor Him who gave them to us, in their lives, which are His. I ask every one at this table if it would not be a stultification of myself to allow this money to be put to any such use, when I earned it with the noble purpose of supporting my children with it.” Elijah banged his fist harder than was necessary on the table and, leaning over toward Meginness, almost shouted:

“You can’t lend the money and retain your self-respect.” Graham let go of his end of the bill and, lighting a cigar, sneered:

“Evidently, you fellows have been practicing on your little piece of melodrama. You got it off real well.”

“No, Graham, we didn’t rehearse our piece at all. It was one of those recitals which naturally recites itself. I don’t wish you any better luck than for you to get very anxious about this matter; to see where you stand; to repent of all your wicked doings; to be saved from your sins; and

for you to marry a good woman and raise a godly family.”

“Amen!” exclaimed Elijah.

All of this affected the pilot visibly. He arose as nonchalantly as possible.

“Well, I must be getting my sleep due me on this watch.”

When he was out of earshot, Meginness asked:

“Was I too hard on him, boys?”

“Not a little bit,” snorted the captain. “Graham has been spreading on his reputation for devilry too thick. I’m not religious, to hurt, but there are bounds of decency—even on a steamboat.”

Of course Elijah was glad to further cultivate the Irishman’s acquaintance. They went out on the guards and talked a long time.

As the minister and the express messenger were walking up Water Street, next morning, the pilot was some ten feet in front. Suddenly he turned and said:

“I want you two gentlemen to pray for me.”

The minister promptly replied:

“Where shall we go to pray? Have you any special temptation from which you want to be delivered?”

“I want to be delivered from unholy lust. I heartily wish to change my life. Come in here.”

They were passing the pilot's hotel on Water Street and turned into it. He led them to his room and, when they were seated, continued:

"My mind is in a turmoil. I have a different view of things since our talk last night. I have been a wicked, selfish man. I have allowed my lust free rein, and it has steadily grown more difficult to curb. My profession has always afforded me enough money to gratify my unholy desires, and, having no one dependent on me, I have come to a most awful state. I never realized how bad it was until last night. That was the first real religious talk I have heard for ten years. Pete is getting but \$60 a month, supporting himself, his wife, and three children on it; I am spending \$150 a month on worse than nothing. His scorn made me feel smaller than I ever felt before. He was so pleasant about it that I could not get angry, but the cutting sarcasm stung me almost to madness as I lay on my bed, trying to go to sleep. I am in a terrible state of mind and want you to pray for me. I have been trying to pray, but I was not raised religiously, and I don't seem to get at it in the right way." He was going down on his knees, and the others knelt with him.

The minister prayed first. He took the pilot's case to their Heavenly Father and asked for the

cleansing blood for this man. Elijah did his best, but he was not in sympathy with the case. Gross, fleshly sins had never had any power over him. Then the suddenness of it, when his thoughts were off on the business of this voyage down the river, had caught him in a sort of spiritual nap. So it seemed to him that his prayers were not availing much, and he closed rather lamely.

When Green closed, Meginness opened up. His warm Milesian nature was all afire for this man for whom he was praying. His words were very pointed, and no one, especially the Lord, could misunderstand them. Conviction laid hold of the wicked man with tenfold more power than before, so that he groveled on the floor. In a wave of ardor, Meginness cried:

“Holy Christ, for the sake of thy own pure life, knock down the devil of lust in this poor wretch, and drag it forth, and cast it away forever and forever more.”

“Amen!” shouted the pilot. Then he arose from the floor and, catching the Irishman in his arms, began to pound him on the back with the palm of his hand.

“He’s done it, Pete; He’s done it, Pete. I’m as good a man this minute as you are. I’m clean. Oh, I’m clean. Oh, Christ saves me; Christ saves me.”

More than two years afterwards Elijah met Meginness and asked:

“How is our friend, the pilot?”

“Oh, didn’t you hear? He was married about a month ago. His wife spent the honeymoon on the boat. She is one dear little woman. Not at all handsome, but very handy, and a good Christian. My wife got them together. She was the first woman since his conversion that he had talked to, longer than five minutes. When he discovered that he was in love with her, he came to me about it.

“‘Pete, here is my punishment. I have no right to a good, pure woman. The sins of my former life have set me apart from the pure joys of matrimony.’

“He broke down and cried. I never felt so sorry for anybody, since the day he asked us to pray for him. But I replied to him:

“‘Now, Graham, aren’t you a saved man?’

“‘Yes, thank God.’

“‘Well, don’t you believe that you will be with the angels and the blood-washed Church in the world to come?’

“‘Yes, truly I believe that.’

“‘Well, this woman you love here on earth surely is no purer than the angels in heaven. It seems to me that you can ask her to be your mate

in this life, if you expect to associate with angels in the next life.'

" 'But doubtless she thinks that I was always a good man. And it would be a shame to deceive such a pure creature.'

" 'Do not deceive her. Tell her the truth, and let her judge whether she can take you. Tell her that the blood covers the past, but that she ought to know it!' "

" 'And how did he manage it?' " asked Elijah.

" 'Well, you see, they did their courting in our parlor, because his wife was a nurse and boarded with us, when she was not employed. He proposed to her in regular form, but added:

" 'Now, Miss Davis, I want you to understand that I have not always been a good man. I was an especially bad sinner against the commandment which you will find marked in this Bible, that I want you to have as a gift from me. Wait until I am gone, and then hunt up the twentieth chapter of Exodus and read the marked verse. I am not so much as worthy to kiss the ground where your feet have trodden. I have repented sincerely and expected to live a single life, until you came into it. I wish that you may answer me favorably, but I dare not hope for it. Farewell for the present. I shall return for my answer on two weeks from to-night.'

" 'Well, Mary brought that Bible, with the

Seventh Commandment marked in red ink, to Mrs. Meginness. They cried and prayed over it a long time, and finally Mary said:

“ ‘Well, I love him, and he loves me. He may have been not so pure as some other men, but he is honest. I believe that my happiness will be safe in his keeping, so I shall accept him when he comes the next time.’

“So that was the upshot of it. That’s my boat whistling, and I am four blocks away. I’ll have to run; good-by and God bless you.”

X: THOU ART THE MAN.

It is possible for you to abstain from the fleshly lusts which have been subjugating your soul. Every command carries a promise at its heart; and this loving entreaty for a better, purer life, hides a Divine undertaking that you shall yet be more than conqueror, putting your foot on flesh and self, and reigning where now you groan in slavery. Take heart! it is possible even for you to abstain from fleshly lusts, because God is able to keep.

REV. F. B. MEYER.

X

Thou Art the Man

The Rev. Andrew J. Thickstun came out of the stable with his horse saddled, into the snow with all the more relish on his third round of the Scotland Circuit, because of the solemn duty-urge which he felt that Sunday morning. He was gently bred and born; had received training clear through the Indiana University; had practiced law for ten years at Bloomfield; but had succumbed, at last, to the insistent call to the service for souls and was now fairly launched upon that career. This morning found him especially fit, for he had just spent a half-hour in the stable, praying for help, and emerged in a state of spiritual levitation which boded well for whatever his hand might find to do that day. It was in 1848, when much wilderness was still unbroken in the Hoosier State. Scotland was a twelve-class circuit, so that the regular monthly appointments might come on Sunday. His appointment, that morning, was only five miles away, where he had not met much of a crowd. He speculated, whimsically, as to the probable number who would meet him, and fell to won-

dering what his subject would be. He had been a local preacher for all those years he had practiced law and had almost never used a pre-arranged sermon. His university training, omnivorous reading, perfect command of the Bible, large human sympathy and acute legal intellect generally guided him with precision to the subject and the text, which were nearly always suggested by local circumstances.

On one occasion, some sacrilegious vandal had cut off a portion of the lower corner of the pulpit Bible, during the big meeting. It was casually mentioned by the preacher in the next morning's sermon. "Jack" Thickstun was the local preacher selected for the afternoon sermon. He had collected the scraps from the mutilated Book, and had preserved the three pieces which contained the only coherent thought in a full sentence. On each of these three scraps were the words, "God forbid." From this sentiment, Mr. Thickstun wove a trenchant discourse. It was a call that God would forbid such vandalism in the future, and especially that He would forbid that this particular vandal should be cut off as he had cut off a part of God's Word.

One of those horny-handed Hoosiers had said:

"Jack Thickstun's memory is like a tar-bucket—whatever touches it sticks to it." Whereat another had remarked:

“And Jack himself is like a cat; wherever he may fall, and however he may fall, he always lights on his feet.” All of this, however, is aside from the events of that particular First Sunday in December, 1848.

As the minister was passing the last house on the road to his appointment, a man came out of it and joined him. The snow was deep, and the minister’s horse broke a path for the foot passenger. Mr. Thickstun remarked:

“I presume that there will be a very small attendance to-day.”

“Undoubtedly,” was the terse reply.

“And this appointment has never been remarkable for its large attendance.”

“That’s very true, sir. I saw you as soon as you rode into the clearing and determined then to go to preaching. Nobody else, belonging to this neighborhood, has seen you this morning. So I guess they will all say that you will scarcely venture out in such a storm, and accordingly they will all remain at home.”

“What is your name, Brother?”

“My name is Silas Jones, but I do not deserve the handle ‘Brother’ to my name.”

“Why not?”

“I don’t belong to the church.”

“That is not the only qualification, with me, for the term ‘Brother.’ I regard all human be-

ings as children of the All-Father. In that sense, I can call you 'Brother,' and I think that you can return the compliment."

"Very good, Brother Thickstun; it doesn't seem that it would be very hard to call you 'Brother', also, from the standpoint of church membership."

"I sincerely trust that such may shortly be the case. Why is it that you are not a member of the church?"

"Because I do not feel worthy."

"In what way do you consider yourself unworthy? Are you morally unfit, or do you lack an evangelical experience?"

"I am morally unfit. Of course, I lack the evangelical experience, also. But I am not one of these sinners who goes around pointing his finger at no-account professors of religion. The triflingest one in the church is a credit to me; for however trifling he may be, he is trying, which I can't say for myself."

"I certainly thank you, in behalf of the church, for that sentiment. I so often hear men say: 'I am as good as some of your church members.'"

"The fellow who will say that is always in a corner, and he blurts out anything which he thinks will justify himself. Now, I'm just naturally ashamed of my unfitness. I can't improve my condition by picking flaws in church members, so I quietly confess my shortcomings."

“You excite my curiosity to know what particular shortcomings you have.”

Thickstun was turned halfway around, leaning back, with his hand on the horse's back, behind the saddle. He was looking straight into Jones's face, and the pointedness of his remark was blunted by the geniality beaming from his sympathetic countenance. Thus he had disarmed many an opposing witness in the former litigious days. Silence followed for a few moments, during which the fellow plodded along through the snow, evidently in deep thought. At last he blurted out:

“To tell you the plain truth, Parson, I am supporting a concubine. I have a good wife and four children, but this woman has wound herself around my affections, until I am ashamed to look straightforward people in the face.”

“I should think you would be ashamed.”

They had now reached the schoolhouse, and were soon busy starting a fire in the immense fireplace. When they had it going properly, they sat down and waited for the congregation, but no one else came. At last, the minister arose behind the teacher's desk and said:

“I don't believe that any one else will be here to-day, so I shall go ahead. We will sing, ‘Come, Thou Fount.’ ”

Then followed prayer; reading of the twelfth

chapter of Second Samuel; another hymn; then the sermon. The text was the sentence in the seventh verse of the twelfth chapter of Second Samuel, which reads:

“Thou art the man.”

The minister opened by saying that God had providentially limited the audience to one man, so that the preacher might speak plainly and not cause scandal. He then took up Silas Jones's sin, and held, that although it was not exactly like David's, it was still a most heinous crime against his lawful wife and children. The money he was giving to the concubine legally and properly belonged to the lawful wife and her children. That no children had been born of the illicit connection was providential, and probably an express provision of the Almighty, for although He could not coerce the wicked pair, He could cause the sterility of the woman, so that no bastard should take from the lawful children their support. The wrong was played up by the preacher with telling force, so that the awfulness of the crime appeared in its blackest hue. Jones writhed and twisted under the blistering denunciation. But the preacher was so kindly and genial, withal, that the “audience” could not get angry with him. His audience was both culprit and jury—quite different from a common case at law. The conclusion was a warm exhortation to

shake off the coils of the she-serpent that had bound him.

At the close of the sermon, Silas Jones was sitting with flaming cheeks and stertorous breath.

The preacher exclaimed: "Brother Jones, lead our prayers."

But Jones could say nothing but: "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

The minister took up the prayer. He asked for a resolution from the poor, bedeviled fellow—asked God to put it into his heart to say right there and then that he would turn from the siren who had bewitched him. After a time he ceased praying, and before he said amen asked Jones to make this resolution on his knees. Jones did so. Mr. Thickstun said "Amen," and then they arose to their feet. Jones was bathed in tears and fell on Thickstun's neck and sobbed like a child. After some moments, he spoke:

"How am I to get rid of this woman?"

"Where does she live?"

"About a half-mile from here, on my place."

"Does your wife understand the situation?"

"I suspect that she does."

"What is the woman's ostensible means of livelihood?"

"She washes and sews for my wife."

"How will it do for your wife, you, and me to talk to her about it?"

“We might ask my wife.”

They went back to Jones's house, and taking Mrs. Jones in a room apart from the family, the minister told her of her husband's return to God. She embraced Silas chastely, and Thickstun continued:

“Sister Jones, your husband has been sinning grievously against you and his children. He wishes to remove the cause of his sin from his presence. I propose that the three of us go to this woman, tell her what has happened to Silas, and persuade her to remove from this neighborhood.”

“Oh, sir, that would be such an indelicate thing for me to do.”

“I realize that, but I feel that the wronged wife in this case will be so much abler to influence her than Jones or I. If you can control your temper when you tell her to leave, I feel that all will go well.”

“The grace of God will be sufficient for me.”

So across the fields, to the harlot's house, these three went on their strange errand. The woman wonderingly invited them into her little cabin. Mrs. Jones opened the subject:

“We have come, Molly, to tell you that Silas professed religion to-day, at the schoolhouse.” Thickstun was watching the woman to see if anything like scorn or incredulity would show. But

he saw, instead, a lively interest, mingled with what seemed to him like penitence. She replied:

“I am real glad to hear it. I, myself, have been praying to-day, but I do not seem to get anywhere. But I promised the Lord, not an hour ago, to move away from here, where I have sinned more than you would believe, Hetty. In some other place, I can live a better life than I have been living here. I have done you a great wrong, Hetty, and I ask your pardon. If you will forgive me, maybe God will forgive me. He forgave another such as I have been. I shall move, to-morrow, to Sullagent. If Mr. Thickstun can believe in me, he will help me to find work.”

This direct solution of their difficulty was as providential, Mr. Thickstun said, as the fact that no one but Silas went to meeting at the school-house. Silas Jones was restored to the confidence of his wife; Mollie moved to Sullagent and lived a blameless life for years, dying at an advanced age, respected by all.

A STICKER

Soon after the above events, the big meeting came off in Scotland. One evening, a young man, very much intoxicated, made his way to the front, and gave his hand to Mr. Thickstun, in token of

his desire to join the church. The minister gave him a seat on the front pew, and took his name in all good faith.

The young fellow had been incited to the act by some mischievous folks in the rear of the house. His mother, a devout widow, was greatly scandalized. She and the minister got him home and to bed. Then the minister, promising to call early in the morning, went home. The next morning, the mother bitterly reproached her son for having disturbed the meeting the night before. He retorted:

“Mother, in what way did I disturb the meeting?”

“By going up to the front and joining the church while you were drunk.”

“Did I join the church while I was drunk?”

“Yes, and it mortified me nearly to death,” replied the weeping mother. The son arose from the table and went around to his mother’s place. He took her head in his arms and, smoothing back the hair from her forehead, reverently kissed it, saying slowly and solemnly:

“I don’t remember a thing about it, mother, dear; but as I joined while I was drunk, a good thing will be to stick to it while I am sober. I drop the drink right here.”

Just then Mr. Thickstun knocked at the door. John opened it, and said:

“Good morning, sir. My mother has been telling me that I joined the church last night while I was drunk, and I said that I shall stick to it while I am sober, which will be a long time, for I have dropped liquor forever and forever.”

The minister was standing, holding his hand; Mrs. Hogan had crept up to his left side, and his arm was around her. He continued:

“Of course, this depends on whether my action was valid. Do you consider me a member of the church?”

“I put your name down as a probationer. You are on six months’ trial.”

“Good! I shall make good and enter in full connection at the end of the probation. Now, Brother Thickstun, I want you to pray for me, that I may hold out faithful.” After prayer, the minister told him that he had ascertained that some roystering mischief-makers had egged him on to the deed. He responded:

“Of course, the devil put it into their fool heads, but that was one time that the old rascal overreached himself. Fact is, I was thinking of joining the church yesterday, before I went to drinking. I thought maybe the drink would drown the feeling. But God overruled the liquor for the good of my soul. But I haven’t got religion, Brother Thickstun; what about that?”

“I have no doubt that you will have religion

very shortly. Your mother knows how to direct you to the Lamb of God. Meantime, if you desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from your sins, that is all we require of you as a probationer."

At the experience meeting that night, John Hogan said:

"They tell me that I joined the church last night when I was drunk. I guess that some smart Alecks persuaded me to do it. Maybe you are here to-night; if so, I wish to say that you never did a better thing in your lives, although you intended it for a desecration of God's house. I intend to stick to the thing I did last night, as long as God gives me breath. I am not satisfied in my mind about the condition of my soul, but I intend to go to the mourner's bench when the call shall be made. It will be a good thing if the fellows who put me up to that mischief will come up here and kneel with me."

John Hogan was converted that night. But those who were responsible for his act were never definitely located. Hogan and his mother moved away soon afterwards, and Mr. Thickstun got out of touch with them, but he always felt sure that John had the stamina to stand firm in the resolution he had formed when he learned that he had joined the church while drunk.

XI: "HERE I AM, MOTHER"

The salvation of a human soul, no matter how poor and unworthy that soul may be, is the greatest event that ever transpires in this old world of ours. So far as we have information in the Scriptures, this is the only event that moves heaven with joy. . . . We know from the words of Jesus that when one single, lost, needy, suffering, sin-cursed, habit-bound man or woman turns to Christ, heaven is moved with joy, and the celestial choirs seize their harps and sing a new song before the throne.

POLEMUS H. SWIFT.

XI

"Here I Am, Mother"

In 1885 I was in one of the Ohio River counties of western Kentucky, and for some weeks stopped at a hotel where a young civil engineer had headquarters. Harry Gendren was one of those mellow, open natures who have popularity for a birthright, and was soon a favorite in the town and hotel.

Harry liked to come to my room to sing. His voice was a deep bass; my roommate, Manis, sang a part which I have never been musician enough to name; Harry's roommate, Jervis, sang a rich tenor; I tried to carry the air.

We sang "Suwanee River," "Old Kentucky Home," and such pieces occasionally, but the old hymn tunes were best adapted to our style of quartet, and I am obliged to say that we made some good music on "Old Hundred," "Sessions," "Coronation," and like pieces.

On one occasion we sang, "Where Is My Boy To-night?" and at its conclusion Harry said:

"If you care to hear the story, I will tell you where I first heard that song."

"Tell it, by all means," chorused the rest of us.

“I must begin by saying that until recently I was a pretty reckless chap. My father has always been a railroad prospector and surveyor, and I have been with him in camp ever since I was a mere kid. He is a good man, the leader of a choir in Evettsburg, where my mother frequently sings solos. I never hope to hear anything this side of the Glory Gates that will satisfy me as well as my mother’s voice in the First Cumberland Church at Evettsburg.

“Father was not careful enough about my companions in camp, and soon I had drifted a long way from the right. But I learned his business, and when I was about eighteen years of age, he put me to work on one of his jobs. The pay was not large, but it was nearly clear money, and I was too young to understand the proper disposal of so much.

“I fell into the habit of spreeing when I went to Evettsburg, or when father was not in camp. I managed to conceal the most of my bad conduct from him, while mother never suspected my wild ways, although her pastor and half of the congregation were well acquainted with my shortcomings.

“Well, when I was about twenty, we reached a point in a job where we had been two weeks in the rain and mud. We got to the end of a section one Thursday noon. Father said that we

would have to lay off until the next Monday morning, because his plans for the next section were not matured. I determined then and there to put in the best part of the next three days in Evettsburg, on a great old jamboree.

“I walked back to the terminus, and the two o'clock freight bumped and banged me forty miles to Evettsburg. Here I disappeared in a saloon down town, and was soon oblivious to surrounding events. The saloon keeper was careful that my whereabouts should be kept quiet, and bundled me into his own living rooms when I became unable to take care of myself. Father stayed at his job, preparing the next week's work, until Saturday afternoon, when he went to Evettsburg, to be present with his choir, at seven in the evening. His train was delayed, so he went directly from the station to the church. By a strange destiny, it seemed, mother was selected to sing ‘Where Is My Boy To-night?’ for the evening service.

“On the way home, father asked for me, and mother replied that she had not seen me. They both became very uneasy; father with an inkling of the truth; mother with all sorts of nameless dreads. As I did not turn up that night, father started a private policeman on a search for me next morning before breakfast. He unearthed me, got me to a hotel, and feed a servant to sober

me up. The policeman then went to report, but as my father was not at home, the whole miserable truth came out to my mother. He said to her, as he was leaving:

“‘Mrs. Gendren, I would advise you not to go to Harry to-day. He will be all right to-morrow morning, and you can see him before he starts back to camp. You would only be needlessly distressed at what you would see to-day, and you can do him no good now. If possible, I shall have him at home to-night after supper.’

“Mother promised that she would not try to see me until I was sober, and went to the morning service. Father came to me early in the afternoon, but I was sleeping heavily, and he thought it best not to disturb me. When I awoke, about five o’clock in the afternoon, I was duly sober, but had a raging headache. When I learned that it was Sunday, I knew that my spree was at an end, so I called for a cup of strong coffee. While drinking it, I heard from the policeman that mother knew everything.

“I was terribly cut up about it, and my mother’s sorrow-laden face arose before me with great distinctness as I sat on the edge of that hotel bed. What with that face and my conscience, you can easily believe that the next few hours were simply awful. Then the church bell rang, and at the sound I aroused myself and said:

“ ‘Mason, I’m going to church.’

“ ‘Where at, Harry?’

“ ‘At the First Cumberland.’

“ ‘You are in pretty rough shape for church.’

“ ‘Yes, but I haven’t time to go home and put on more suitable clothes. I shall sit under the gallery, behind a column, and will not be noticed. You must go with me to steer me past the rum shops, for it is very important that I keep straight, as I have to go to work again, tomorrow.’ Mason smiled, but answered that he would go with me.

“I was wearing my corduroy surveying togs and a wool shirt. The servant brushed me up, but I must have looked pretty rough when Mason and I slipped quietly into a side entrance, and took seats in a secluded corner, near the pulpit and choir. I was greatly agitated by entirely new sensations, and felt that a critical point in my career was at hand.

“There were very few in the room when I entered, but in twenty minutes the great auditorium was packed, for Dr. Darby was then in the height of his popularity, and drew immensely.

“After the opening prayer, my mother arose to sing her solo. This had been my principal reason for attending, but I had no idea of what she was going to sing. She had sung it a time or two,

and it was now by request of several that she was to sing it again. If possible, she would have avoided it, after the morning's developments, but she had been announced in all the papers, and nothing else had been rehearsed, so she must, perforce, sing what lacerated her soul at every word. As I have already told you, it was the first time I had ever heard it.

“At the first line, ‘Where is my wandering boy to-night?’ the audience was wonderfully affected. Mother did not dream that I was present, but supposed that I was yet in the hotel. All her gentle, patient, loving nature stood revealed in the painful moan of those first words. Oh, how I hated myself for making it possible that she should sing those words from the heart. I dropped my head in my hands, and rocked like a tree shaken by the wind.

“Every word sank deeper and deeper into my soul. I began to pray. I asked God to forgive me for bruising that tender, loving mother's heart. I called myself an ingrate, a matricide, for my incoherent brain got the impression from her tones that she was dying. The refrain, peculiarly composed, as you know, gives the impression of a wail, and when she reached it the second time, I thought that I should shriek aloud. Then I remembered that I had sinned, not only against my mother, but against my God.

I asked his pardon in a frenzy, and received it just as she reached the last stanza:

“ ‘Go for my wandering boy to-night;
 Go search for him where you will;
 But bring him to me with all his blight,
 I’ll tell him I love him still.’

“Then came the refrain:

“ ‘O where is my boy to-night;
 O *where* is my boy to-night?’

“When she sang that second ‘where’ with all the emphasis that her genius, her longing, her mother heart could give it, the agony of her soul seemed so great, that it irresistibly drew me to my feet, and I walked up the aisle toward her, with my arms outstretched. Further words died on her lips. The organist ceased playing, and in wondering surprise turned to look at my mother. For the briefest moment silence reigned; then I sobbed like any child:

“ ‘Here I am, mother.’

“A carefully studied melodrama could not have been better acted. Mother came hastily down the choir steps and folded me in her arms. Dr. Darby seized one hand, and father took the other. The organist gave the chords of ‘Old Hundred,’ and almost as one voice the congregation burst into the doxology, ‘Praise God, from

whom all blessings flow,' and I think that they must have sung it a dozen times while they were shaking hands with me.

"All that was more than two years ago. I date a different life from that night."

"But you never heard the song again under quite such dramatic circumstances, Harry?"

"I am not so sure about that. I heard my own words to my mother repeated under vastly different circumstances, though perhaps you will say that they were as remarkable as what I have just related.

"Last summer I was making a 'horseback survey' in southeastern Kentucky. A local preacher by the name of Logan was guiding me, and I was to stay at his house one night.

"Several days previous he had come upon a party of gamblers in the woods. His son, Thomas, was one of the number, but he had impartially reported all of them to the Grand Jury; they had heard of it, and had been in hiding ever since. With Spartan-like determination, he had resolved that his son should suffer with the rest, but his wife was deeply grieved at the circumstance, and felt indignant that a father should immolate a son in such a way.

"I knew nothing of these facts when Mr. Logan and I reached his house. I could see that all

relations were not thoroughly cordial, but could not surmise the disturbing cause.

“After supper, we sat in the soft June moonlight, and Mr. Logan asked me to sing. Mrs. Logan was sitting farthest out in the yard, near the ‘office,’ as the boys’ building in some Southern front yards is called.

“After several other pieces, I thought of ‘Where Is My Boy To-night?’ My mind reverted to that blessed Sunday night in Evettsburg. My mother’s longing seemed to fill my own soul, so that the singing was particularly expressive. We were in a ‘cove,’ where rocky precipices hung near, and my words seemed to climb the cliffs and enter all their gloomy crevices and caverns with the wild, despairing query of the weird refrain. I don’t think that I was ‘stuck on my own voice,’ but I could not help knowing that I was singing well, and I felt a fine exhilaration in the surroundings.

“Mr. and Mrs. Logan were facing me, and did not see what I saw, when I started on the last stanza. A young man walked from the shadow of the fir tree to the office. He lifted his finger in warning to me, so I proceeded with the singing as though nothing had happened, but I watched him narrowly, though I could not believe that he meant harm while acting so openly.

He stood still in the shadow of the office until I finished.

“There was silence for a moment, then Mrs. Logan rose in a bewildered way, tossed her arms wildly, and moaned, not loud, but with searching, penetrating force:

“ ‘Oh, *where* is my boy to-night?’ The figure in the shadow cried aloud the words:

“ ‘Here I am, mother.’

“She turned as Logan and I sprang to our feet.

“ ‘Tommy, Tommy,’ she murmured, as the strong young fellow caught her in a filial embrace. Logan said, as severely as possible:

“ ‘Young man, are you aware that you are wanted by the Grand Jury?’ ”

“ ‘Yes, father, but the song that I have just heard and mother’s heartbroken wail have determined me to stand my trial and pay the penalty like a man. I was skulking near the house in order to get provisions to keep me until after court would adjourn. Now, I shall stay here to-night, and to-morrow I shall go to town and plead guilty. Then I shall never gamble again, please God.’

“ ‘Amen!’ said the father. The son added:

“ ‘Mother, you will never again have to ask, “Where is my boy to-night?” as miserably as you asked it to-night!’ ”

XII: SOME OF ELIJAH'S
AFTERMATHS

XII

Some of Elijah's Aftermaths

I have already related how John Hoagland was converted ten years after a conversation with Elijah which was never effaced from John's memory, and which led directly to his salvation. Elijah thinks that that was the most remarkable of his aftermaths. But he had a regular system of follow-up work with all who came under his influence. Numerous are the instances of good work for souls that he did at a distance and after lapses of time. I shall relate only two such cases.

Among his friends at Elrick were Mrs. Jane Short and her son Oliver. Mrs. Short was unhappily mated with a drunken libertine who mistreated her and Oliver. His infidelities to his wife were common fame, but she clung to him a long time after she was convinced that he was untrue. But his treatment of Oliver finally compelled her to seek the protection of the law. She went to the minister about it, and he advised her to separate from Short for the Scriptural reason. She disliked the reflection this would cast on Oliver's future, but finally came to the decision after an exceptionally cruel beating that Short

gave the boy. He had often beaten her without causing a separation. She was shortly granted a decree, and decided to move from South Dakota to Minnesota. After all was ready, she and Oliver spent the last night in Elrick at the parsonage, where Mrs. Short was on exceptional terms with Mrs. Green. At family prayers that night, Mr. and Mrs. Green talked for a long time about the mother and son joining the church before they changed homes. Elijah said:

“Mrs. Short, you can scarcely estimate the advantage a church letter will be to you in Minnesota.”

“But I am all ready to leave to-morrow.”

“I will go out, gather in a few neighbors, and we will have a little meeting here. I can open the doors of the church, and you can both join. Then I can give both of you letters to the pastor of the church in the town where you are going, and he will complete your probation on his charge and receive you into full connection.”

“All right, I believe that I will do it. What do you say, Oliver?”

“I don't want to.”

“Why, Oliver, you wanted to join the church with me last year. I am sorry that I didn't join then.”

“Mother, I have such bitter feelings toward father that it will be hypocritical for me to join the

church now. Let us wait until I have a chance to pray over the matter, and get back to where I was last year."

"Very well, we had better wait, I guess." The minister interposed:

"We can have the meeting as I proposed to-night, and you can join, Mrs. Short, even though Oliver prefers to wait."

"No; Oliver wouldn't go in last year without me; I won't go in now without him."

There is where, perforce, the matter rested. Elijah secured the promise from both that they would not let the matter drop. But he understood the thousand and one hindrances that would stand in their way after removal. So he wrote a full account of their case to the Methodist minister in their new home. He asked it as a personal favor that the brother minister would hunt the pair up, and get them on salvable ground, and into the church. At the same time he wrote the Shorts frequently and kept their duty constantly before them. Fortunately the minister in their new home took a deep interest in the case, and he diligently worked the ground in the soil of their hearts which Green had prepared. And his labor bore fruit. One day Oliver said:

"Mother, Mr. Harris keeps after a fellow just like Mr. Green used to, at Elrick."

“I was thinking the same thing. Have you forgotten our promise to Mr. Green?”

“No; but I believe that I would have forgotten it, if it were not for Mr. Harris so everlastingly keeping after us.”

“How do you feel toward your father by now?”

“I don't hate him any more.”

“Then, what's the matter with us joining the church next Sunday?”

“Nothing is the matter with it.”

“All right; that's what we'll do.”

The latter part of the next week, Elijah received three letters: one from the minister, one from Mrs. Short, one from Oliver. They all told the same happy story. The last paragraph of the minister's letter read:

“I have become deeply interested in this case, because you seemed to care so much about it. I wanted success nearly entirely on your account. I read the parable of the Good Shepherd and the sheep. You certainly loved your sheep, and you are certainly a good shepherd.”

On one of Elijah's works, there was a strong opposition to evangelistic meetings. He found, indeed, that this opposition was almost organized. Anyhow, he was obliged to forego a revival series of meetings, on account of this bitter

feeling against it. But he put in the year in the pulpit by giving the people the most trenchant preaching he knew. In his pastoral visitation, he urged a revival right down to the farewell visits. He had fifty people in the little county seat on his prayer list. The man who followed him saw the necessity for an upheaval and took up the work just where Elijah had left off. By the middle of Lent, a committee asked the new pastor to send for an evangelist. One of these said:

“Brother Pinchot, I frequently said last year that I would never hear Brother Green preach again; but I always went back. I have often said the same thing of you. There is something in Christianity deeper and more vital than I enjoy, and I am not going to try to do with what I have any longer.”

The evangelist was secured, and a few days after Easter, Elijah Green received the following letter from Pinchot:

“HOSMER, NEB., APRIL 30, 1915.

“DEAR BROTHER GREEN:

“I received your letters asking about conditions here, but have delayed answering because I felt like I wanted something to report before I would write.

“I have been moved to write you a number of times, but did not follow the impulse as I ought to have done. It has always seemed to me a cold-blooded thing for a minister to follow where another has sweat blood, as it

were, and never so much as write and say: 'Brother, I am finding your bloody footprints here.'

"Well, I want to tell you that your time in tiding this work along was by no means thrown away. It is no small thing that one who follows you finds everywhere a thoroughgoing respect for you, and not anywhere a bad taste in any one's mouth.

"I am very sure that the first splendid outcome of my time here is, in no small degree, due to your faithfulness, and the wholesome conditions you left for me to work from.

"Thirty-six were added to our membership on Easter Sunday. Your latest revision of the roll left twenty-two, to which we add the thirty-six, making fifty-eight in all, and more to follow right away soon. I can see a large work coming on, and yours shall always be a worthy share in it.

"Very cordially yours,

"PIERRE PINCHOT."

In Elijah's reply to this letter, among other things, he wrote:

"I am deeply grateful for the victory at Hosmer. I would have been intensely chagrined at any other kind of a report. God bless you and all of the Hosmer people.

"Lovingly,

"ELIJAH GREEN."

XIII: CONCLUSION

XIII

Conclusion

I suppose that I owe it to the reader not to close until I have said something about Elijah Green's reception of the foregoing pages of this book. I have tried not to lionize him, but he was not pleased with some of the passages where he felt that I had been more flattering than he deserved. Very gravely, he remarked to me:

"You see, Ed, I am just a plain plug of a country parson. I am not posing for the hero of a book. These things which you have told about me, with slight variations, might have been written about a dozen or twenty other ministers of my acquaintance."

"I presume so, Elijah, but you must realize that you are the one minister whom I have known intimately enough to write up. I think that the Preface shows that any minister will have one or more experiences with which to match the ones in this book."

"Maybe that's so. But I feel that my brethren need a warning on some of the things in my ministerial career. Most of all, I do not consider the

little private fortune which I possess an advantage in my life work. I sometimes feel that it has been a disadvantage to me." I must have stared incredulously at my old intimate as I replied:

"Do you mean to say that that thousand dollars a year, independent of your ministerial salary, has injured you in any way?"

"I have so considered it several times in my life. More than once, it has leaked out into my parish that my private means would support me, and those who would otherwise have contributed liberally quietly lay down in the traces. They could not know, seemingly, that they were missing a blessing by withholding their contributions from the budget. I have always strictly tithed the income from my capital at the beginning of the year; then, when my Conference year is up, I tithe my ministerial salary. I always had some pet project or other to build up, and these schemes have often suffered by a slump in my salary, on which I had not counted. Jesus had such cases as mine especially in view, when he commanded his disciples not to take anything in their purses. When he said that the laborer is worthy of his hire, he undoubtedly meant that the Gospel ought to support its servants."

"I shall not dispute your word, but it sounds far-fetched."

“Nevertheless, it is a very real thing. I have been obliged to move entirely out of an Annual Conference, not to say away from a charge, several times, merely because folks leaned on me. My means have crippled the financial efficiency of a charge in exactly the same way that State aid to the church injures it. We see this in the State-aided ecclesiastical systems of Spain, Russia, Germany, England. I have in my mind a little concrete instance of the working of such a system. In my younger days, I knew of a little Episcopal church in southern Indiana which was endowed by a wealthy lady. She contributed \$1,000 a year to the support of the minister. The parish had only to keep up insurance, fuel, light, janitor, organist. But it was a constant grind for them to do that. There was a little Methodist parish right by the side of this Church of the Holy Innocents, which was not as wealthy as the Episcopal organization. This Methodist chapel paid \$800 to its pastor and kept up heavier incidental and benevolent charges than its more pretentious neighbor. The rector of the Holy Innocents and I grew intimate. He told me that he had entered upon the ministry of that church with buoyant hopes. With his salary out of the financial pathway, there seemed nothing for him to do but to build up the Kingdom. But the harder he worked, the less he seemed to

accomplish. He was a brilliant, cultured man, who could make and preach good sermons, but he accomplished nothing. I attended a service one October evening. The audience consisted of the choir, the organist, the janitor, three genteel old ladies, two extra genteel old gentlemen, a disconsolate little girl, and myself. We had a fine sermon. He had asked me to come into the vestry at the close of the service, and I did so. While he was disrobing, he said:

“ ‘Mr. Green, let us go to Talfair’s church on Angle Street. It will not close for a half-hour.’

“ ‘When we got out on the street, we could hear Talfair preaching a block away. Dr. Cole said:

“ ‘Talfair takes his missionary collection to-night. I often drop in on him after my service is out. He is achieving ten times the results that I can report. I want you to see him in action on the same night you see me. After his service, we are all three going to my study for a little talk.’

“ ‘Talfair closed very shortly after we got into the church. He called for a collection and received over \$50 from the audience which crowded the house. Some of Dr. Cole’s people were there, he told me. After the service, it was only a short time until we were in Dr. Cole’s study. Talfair immediately asked:

“ ‘How did you come out to-night, Brother Cole?’

“ ‘Ask Mr. Green,’ wearily replied Cole.

“I saw that this Episcopalian rector and Methodist preacher were on good terms, but it was difficult for me to say what was in my mind. Dr. Cole came to my rescue with:

“ ‘Go ahead, Mr. Green; tell Mr. Talfair just what you saw at the Holy Innocents.’

“ ‘Well, I saw a choir faultlessly surpliced; I heard an exquisite voluntary solo by Mrs. Silvers; I heard a thoughtful sermon delivered with flawless diction.’

“ ‘What about the audience?’ mercilessly inquired Dr. Cole.

“ ‘Well, outside of the choir, the audience consisted of eight people, counting myself and the janitor.’

“ ‘There you are!’ exclaimed Cole to Talfair, resignedly. Talfair turned to me, and very gently remarked:

“ ‘Dr. Cole is pretty well discouraged with the outcome of his labors in his own vineyard. We have had a good many heart-to-heart talks on the subject. I know that Dr. Cole can preach all around me. His parish actually numbers more souls and possesses more wealth than mine, yet the contributions from my people actually exceed the apportionment. Dr. Cole has his theory; maybe he wants to tell it.’ I interposed:

“ ‘Possibly Dr. Cole spends too much time in study and does not visit his people enough.’

“ ‘He actually makes more pastoral calls than I do,’ rejoined Talfair.

“ ‘Yes, we have looked at it from every angle,’ said Cole. ‘And I have concluded that it is the result of our endowed salary. It is a positive hindrance to our work. But you couldn’t convince our vestry of that fact. I determined tonight, before I started to preach, that I will not serve the Holy Innocents another year.’ And he made his word good. He went to a little church that was in debt, as soon as his year was out. They paid all expenses, met all benevolent claims, paid him his \$800.00, and retired their debt.”

“Then it is a blessing for a parish to be in a constant strain to meet financial obligations?”

“Sounds paradoxical, doesn’t it? But I believe that it is often true.”

“Very well; now tell me of anything else in the book that you don’t like.”

“Let me tell you of something I *do* like. That is your style of relating the experiences of the converts in your book. Modern writers of evangelical experiences have a way of searching for unusual nomenclature. I like the old words, ‘penitence,’ ‘conviction,’ ‘conversion.’ It ought to be made easy for one to find Christ, on account

of the language of those who are pointing out the road. Whenever I am inquiring the road to any place, it makes me tired for one to palaver while directing me. Plain simplicity is the system for me."

"Have you anything, Elijah, that you would like to say on the *modus operandi* of conversion?"

"I think that the entire book is an attempt to show several of the different ways in which people have found Christ. The thing for every one who has an evangelical experience to remember is, that the particular manner, or place, or time, or system, or lack of system of the event must not be set up by himself as the way for others to find Christ.

"Now, I was converted while a minister was praying for me in his private library; would I prescribe the same circumstances for the next inquirer? Nay, verily. But that is the very mistake so often made by good Christians. A respectable number believe that evangelical salvation comes at baptism; another large number have no use for a conversion which took place anywhere else than at the altar or 'mourners' bench'; still others look askance at the revival. Cyprian, and many other ancient Christians, found peace at baptism, which led to an undue emphasis upon that rite. I was once administer-

ing the Holy Communion, when a lady became greatly affected, and praised God with fervor. I mentioned it to a friend of hers after the service, and he replied:

“‘Yes, Sister Braswell always shouts at the Lord’s Table, because she was converted there.’ She had as good a right to demand that all others shall be converted at Communion as Cyprian had to expect that all others shall receive the change during the rite of baptism.”

“Tell me just what you consider conversion to be.”

“If I understand the subject, conversion is that evangelical experience in the Christian life where the individual appropriates the merits of the sacrificial death of Christ to his own individual case. This supreme event may occur at any place, and under any circumstances. That it frequently occurs during baptism or at the mourners’ bench is an argument in favor of those means for this end; but not to the exclusion of other and well-tested means of grace.”

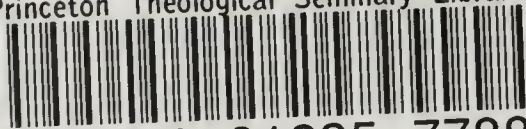
“I take it, then, that in the main, you are moderately well pleased with the book.”

“Yes. I have read a preface somewhere, in which the author says to his readers: ‘I like this book immensely and trust that you may have the good taste to like it also.’ I could not have written quite those words, Ed, had I written the

book, but in the main, I like it. Except 'Thou Art the Man' and 'Here I Am, Mother,' all of the chapters deal with events in my life. The things you have recorded are the things I have prayed, agonized, studied, worked for. The sweetest things in life that have ever come to me are here related. Absolutely nothing else counted for me. I would, at any time in my career, go through any hardship to lead a soul out of darkness into light. And still, in the seventy-fourth year of my body, and the forty-ninth year of my redeemed spirit, I would go anywhere and do anything to see a soul saved. Maybe the book will go on, bringing men to Christ, long after I have preached my last sermon. Let us pray for that, Ed."

THE END

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